

Reynard the Fox




PICTURED BY

J. J. MORA





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PUBLISHERS . . .

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Colonial Press:
Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.
Boston, Mass , U. S. A.

Preface

A version of the famous beast fable, "Reynard the Fox," one of the most ancient stories in existence, and as assured a classic as "Æsop's Fables" themselves. The original, of which the present poem is a translation, is a burlesque narrative in low-German verse, dated 1481, or eleven years before the discovery of America. It was one of the first works printed in Germany, and by pointing out in poignant satire many of the vices of the Roman Church of that day, it did as much as the works of Erasmus, Rabelais and Boccaccio to pave the way for the Reformation. This German poem has never lost its popularity; from the fifteenth to the end of the eighteenth century not fewer than *twenty-two editions* of the original were published, besides translations into nearly every language of Europe. One liberty with the original was taken by the translator—the scene of the action having been transplanted for obvious reasons from Germany to England.

This book belongs to the rare class which is equally delightful to children and to their elders. In this regard it may be compared to "Gulliver's Travels," "Don Quixote" and "Pilgrim's Progress." For wit and shrewd satire, and for pure drollery both in situations and description, it is unsurpassed. The animals are not men dressed up in the skin of beasts, but are throughout true to their characters, and are not only strongly realised but consistently drawn, albeit in so simple and captivating a way that the subtle art of the narrator is quite hidden, and one is aware only of reading an absorbingly interesting and witty tale. The brief couplets are the best form of versification which could be conceived for engaging and holding the attention of children.

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Names

APPLIED TO THE ANIMALS, WHICH APPEAR IN THIS POEM

NOBLE	the Lion.
REYNARD (also Rankey)	the Fox.
ERMINET	the She-Fox.
RANKEY and RUSSET	their Whelps.
GROWLER	the Wolf.
SURLY	the She-Wolf.
GIB	the Cat.
FRISKY	the Lap-Dog.
GRAY	the Badger.
CHANTICLEER	the Cock.
SIMPLE	the Ram.
CASTOR	the Beaver.
PUG	the Monkey.
PRY	the She-Ape.
PUSS	the Hare.
BROWN	the Bear.

Reynard the Fox.

Part I Canto I

The Accusation

Argument



King Noble orders public feasts
For all his Subjects, birds and beasts.
Reynard, accus'd of knavish art,
Gray, his relative, takes his part ;
When, lo ! the Cock, Sir Chanticleer,
And all his family, appear
With fresh complaints. The King, by warrant,
Sends for the Fox. Brown goes the errand.

It happen'd on a Whitsunday,
When woods and fields look'd green and gay,
When balmy flow'rs and herbs were springing,
And feather'd folks were sweetly singing ;
The Morn was fine, the weather clear,
And fragrant odours fill'd the air,
When Noble, sov'reign King of Beasts,
Proclaim'd a Court and public feasts.
His loyal Subjects, Lords and Commons,
Obey'd their Master's royal summons,



And many a valiant Knight and Squire
 To Court repair'd in grand attire
 With their attendants, great and small;
 'Twas difficult to count them all.
 E'en Crane and Jackdaw, Rook and Jay,
 Buzzard and Owl, came forth that day;
 For Noble to this sumptuous feast
 Had summon'd every bird and beast,
 Save crafty Reynard, who alone,
 For vilest mischief he had done,
 Was holden in such ill report,
 He durst not show his face at Court.
 As deeds of darkness shun the light,
 So Rankey did; that treach'rous wight,
 Convinc'd he would not be commended
 By those he had so oft offended.
 No one was found on that dread day,
 Except his friend, the Badger Gray,
 But who, when Sessions did begin,
 Brought against him some Action in.

Growler, the Wolf, and his relations
 Presented first their accusations.
 Growler the royal Throne approach'd,
 And thus his doleful tale he broach'd:
 "May't please Your Majesty, for Pity
 And Justice' sake I do intreat Ye
 To listen to the rueful story
 Of wrongs, which I must lay before Ye;



For Reynard, vilest of his race,
Hath overwhelm'd me with disgrace.
My wife, alas! he has beguil'd,
And tortured too my helpless child,
For one dark evening out of spite,
He robb'd him of his precious sight.
When tried for this his foul offence,
Instead of making a defence,
Away the sneaking rascal stole,
And basely fled into his hole.

I should not finish in a week,
Of all his knavish tricks to speak;
Nay, if the greatest Linen-draper
Had all his stock made into paper,
'Twere not sufficient to contain
The wrongs, of which I might complain.
Then grant me but this one request:
Revenge my child; I waive the rest."

When Growler thus his speech had ended,
Frisky, a Lap-dog, much offended,
Began a tale in French, and swore:
"Parbleu!" that when he had no more
Than one poor sausage, in a wood
Vile Rankey robb'd him of his food.

Him Gib, the Cat, did hastily
Cut short. "In troth, Your Majesty,"
Quoth he, "may well on Reynard frown;
'Tis felt by all, to All 'tis known,



We stand of him in greater fear,
 Than of Yourself. This Frisky here,
 However, tells a pretty story,
 But lame, as I shall prove before Ye.
 The sausage, Sir, in fact was *mine*,
 Although to claim it I decline.
 One night, in close pursuit of game,
 By chance into a mill I came;
 The miller, who sat in the passage,
 Was fast asleep; I took the sausage,
 And therefore Frisky must admit,
 That he had no pretence to it."

"Gib," said the Leopard, "'tis in vain
 Of such small matter to complain.
 We know full well, that Reynard's tricks
 Are more provoking than Old Nick's;
 He robs and steals like any thief
 And footpad, and he would as lief
 Sell King and Country for a pullet
 As you catch mice to fill your gullet.

To prove the truth of what I say,
 Hear what hath happen'd yesterday
 To tim'rous Puss, the harmless hare:
 To cozen her into a snare,
 With promises the wretch begun:
 He swore she should become a nun,
 And he would teach her to sing mass
 As naturally as eat grass.



But when upon her Knees she fell
(Convinc'd that Reynard meant it well),
To sing the Creed, the villain seiz'd her,
And between both his knees he squeez'd her,
And would have kill'd her, if her cry
Had not struck me, as I pass'd by.
I heard the noise, and going in,
I found him plucking Pussey's skin.
The wounds, which on her neck appear,
Confirm the truth of what you hear.
If you, My Lords, would now defer
To punish this fell murderer,
You would encourage him to break
The King's peace, nay, in time his neck;
For those, who suffer from him, would
Seek their revenge, on whom they could,
And you and your descendants may
Be made to rue it some fine day."

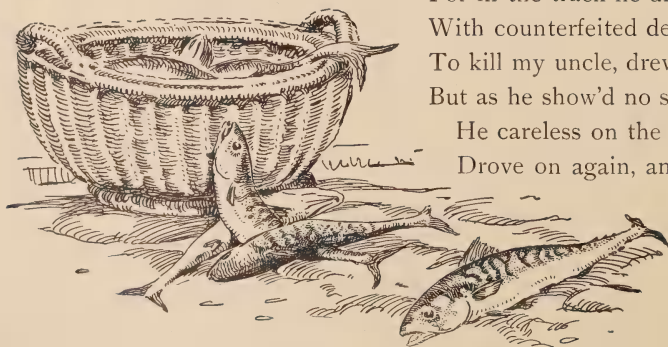
Quoth Growler: "Very true, My Lord;
The Leopard spoke a well-tim'd word.
All peaceful Creatures, Sir, will thank Ye
If you will hang this rascal Rankey;
But if you spare him on this score,
He'll rob and murder hundreds more."

The badger Gray, nephew to Reynard,
To plead his uncle's cause did strain hard,
And thus he did the Wolf address:
"Sir Growler, an old proverb says,

No Praise comes from an enemy.
This shows your bitter calumny
Against my uncle Reynard here,
Who, if in Court he should appear,
Would make some busy folks, I wot,
Right fain, Sir Wolf, to change their note.
You speak of faults long since committed;
But why, good Sir, have you omitted
The cruelties and actions vile
Which your own character defile?
You probably have not forgot
Your ent'ring once into a plot
With him to stroll about for booty,
And that my uncle, true t' his duty,
Was nearly kill'd on your account,
Which, with your leave, I must recount:

A Clown they met once, with his Cart,
Bringing new mackerel to mart;
Growler was eager to devour them;
But lacking money to pay for them,
Reynard had pity on his hard case
And ventur'd for his friend his carcase;

For in the track he did lie down
With counterfeited death; the Clown
To kill my uncle, drew his knife;
But as he show'd no sign of life,
He careless on the cart did lay him,
Drove on again, and meant to flay
him.



Reynard flung down the mackerel,
Which Growler pick'd up as they fell,
Who wisely follow'd at some distance,
And came not near, for fear of mischance.
Reynard at length was tir'd of keeping
His place, and from the carriage leaping,
He for his share of th' fish did call;
But Growler had devour'd them all,
And he got nothing for his pain
But the bare bones, which did remain.

Soon after this, a Butcher kill'd
A fine fat Hog. Sly Reynard, fill'd
With hopes of meeting with nice fare,
To Growler made haste to repair.
To share the booty they agreed,
When Reynard, eager to succeed,
Rush'd boldly in, and flung the meat
Out of the shop into the street,
But was attack'd by Dogs, who curried
His hide, till he was almost worried.
All bleeding he to Growler came,
His mess of pork from him to claim.
Quoth Growler: 'Yes, come here and eat
This fine fat morsel of hog's meat;'
And with a sneer to him he flung
The Crook on which the sow had hung.
Reynard, for usage so unfair,
Was mad with rage and with despair.

Nay, many other tricks I could
Report like this, Sir, if I would ;
But I'll be silent on the rest,
Reynard himself can tell them best.
I only shall observe, My Lord,
That Growler spoke a foolish word,
And brought great scandal on his wife,
Whom at the peril of his life
He ought to screen from defamation,
But to refute his accusation,
Some years ago Reynard by chance
Met with Dame Surly at a dance
In Growler's absence ; he was ready
To show attention to the lady,
And (as report says) she no less
Was pleas'd with Reynard's courteousness ;
At least we never heard her mention
That he abus'd her condescension ;
Nor can it add to Growler's honour,
To bring disgrace and blame upon her.

The Leopard's tale of Puss is nought ;
For if she sung not as she ought,
Reynard, her teacher and director,
Did right to punish and correct her.
Young folks are petulant and wild ;
To spare the rod would spoil the child.

Beau Frisky too had best refrain
Of loss of sausage to complain.

You heard, My Lord, that in the woods
Reynard took from him stolen goods.
Reynard, for acting as he did,
Deserves more to be prais'd than chid.
The duty of men in high trust is
To bring such sneaking rogues to Justice ;
If he had hang'd the Cur, 'tis true
The devil had but got his due ;
But Reynard modestly refrain'd ;
Because it is by law ordain'd,
That Kings alone should have the sway
To take a subject's life away.
Reynard with so much loyalty
Respects the rights of Royalty,
That, since Your Majesty proclaim'd
A general peace, he never maim'd
Nor hurt a single peaceful creature ;
For he is of such sober nature,
That he makes but one meal a day ;
And, like an hermit, his array
Is a coarse, rugged frock of hair ;
Meat he abhorreth for his fare,
Nay, those who saw him last will tell
He left his house, and built a cell,
And was grown pale with everlasting
Contrition, penance, pray'rs and fasting.

GRAY..



My uncle thus, in spite of railings
And slander, expiates his failings;
And if for his defence you call,
He will confute his sland'ers all."
Gray scarce had done, when Chanticleer,
The Cock, in mourning did appear.
Two Sons accompanied their Sire,
Like him in funeral attire,
With hoods of crape and torches lighted,
And doleful lays they both recited;
Two others follow'd with a bier;
Mournful and slowly they drew near,
With heartfelt sighs and deepest groan,
Their fav'rite sister to bemoan.

The Cock in tears the Throne approach'd,
And thus his sad harangue he broach'd:
" My Liege, have pity on a man,
The most distressèd of his clan,
Who, with his children here before You,
Is come for vengeance to implore You
On Reynard, who with fell design
Hath done great harm to me and mine.
When hoary winter left the plain,
And Spring smil'd on the World again,
When leaves were budding, daisies springing,
And tuneful birds in thickets singing,
The Sun at dawn of morning found me
With my young family around me;

Ten Sons and fourteen Daughters fair,
Breathing with joy the genial air;
All of one breed, and full of life,
Brought up by my good prudent wife.
Protected by a massy wall
And six bold mastiffs, stout and tall,
They liv'd, in spite of Reynard crafty,
Within a Cloister-yard in safety.
Reynard lurk'd oft the wall around,
But ne'er a cranny there he found;
Our mastiffs too, who were awake,
Would force him to his heels to take;
For, when within reach they espied him,
With claws and teeth so well they ply'd him,
That narrowly he saved his fleece,
And for some time left us in peace.

But lo! our enemy contriv'd,
Our joy, alas! should be short-liv'd.
In hermit's garb the traitor came,
With letters written in Your name,
Where strictest orders were express'd
To keep peace between bird and beast.
He said he scorn'd the joys of sense,
And led a life of penitence,
To expiate his former guilt,
And streams of blood which he had spilt;
He vow'd in future he would eat
No poultry, nor forbidden meat.



A hood he wore, and scapulary,
And next t' his skin a frock, all hairy;
And testimonies from his Prior
Show'd that he was become a friar.
At parting he said: 'Well, my friend,
I to the Lord thee recommend,
For I must look to my affairs,
And go to say my evening pray'rs.'
Thus canting he went off; but laid
For us a treach'rous ambuscade.

All joyful to my little crew,
To tell the happy news I flew,
That Reynard friar's garments wore,
And was our enemy no more.
Now for the first time we did venture
Out of our gate. A dire adventure
Awaited us; for whilst we stray'd
And sported on a sunny glade,
Reynard, conceal'd below a bush,
Upon us suddenly did rush;
One of my hopeful Sons he slew
And of my fairest daughters two,
And since, where'er he can detect them,
Nor walls nor mastiffs can protect them;
By main force, or by cunning sleight,
He picks them up by day and night.
Five only out of twenty-four
Are left; the rest he did devour.



My daughter Rake-up on this bier,
Slain by the murderer, lies here;
He bit her neck off yesterday.
Revenge her death, my Liege, I pray.”
“Sir Gray,” quoth Noble, “did you hear?
Fine things of the hermit-fox appear.
Was ’t thus that with his fasts he meant it?
Sure as I live, he shall repent it!

Good Cock, we’ve heard your mournful tale
And we your daughter’s fate bewail;
Thus, first of all, we’ll see the honour
Of funeral rites bestow’d upon her;
Next with our Council we shall further
Consult, how to revenge this murder.”

The King then order’d young and old,
Vigils for the dead hen to hold;
But how *Placebo Domino*,
Psalm, Lesson and Response, or so,
Was sung, what Chapter and which verse,
Would be full tedious to rehearse;
We therefore cut that matter short,
And hope the Reader thanks us for’t.

Soon as the body was interr’d,
A marble tomb-stone was prepar’d,
On whose smooth surface (as we’ve heard)
The following epitaph appear’d:

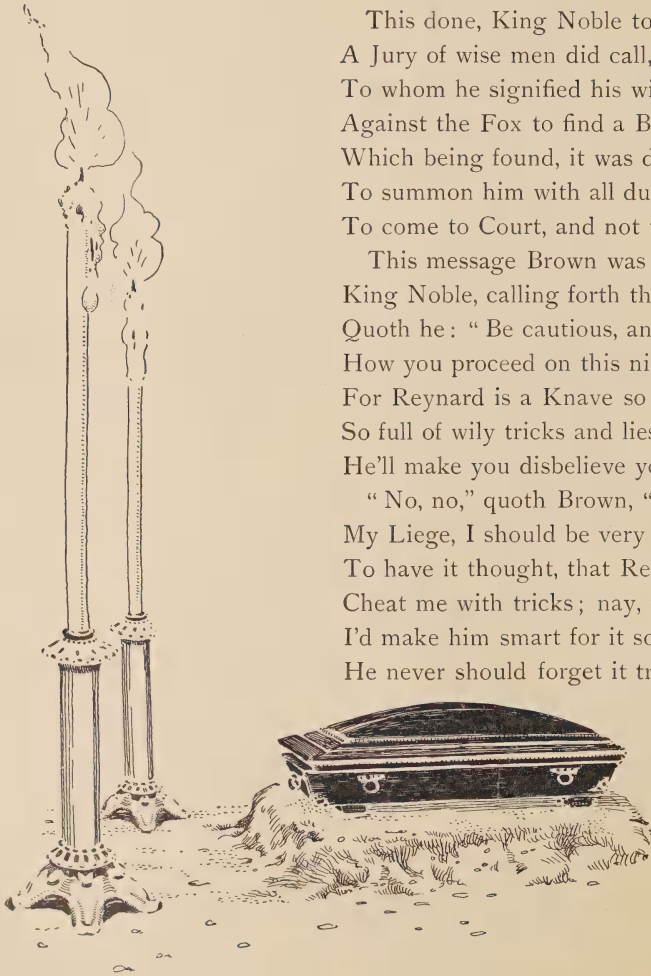
REYNARD THE FOX

"Rake-up, child of Chanticleer,
In the cold grave lies buried here.
She was of hens the very best,
And full of eggs she laid her nest.
She's bit to death by Reynard base.
Wand'rer, have pity with her case."

This done, King Noble to his hall
A Jury of wise men did call,
To whom he signified his will,
Against the Fox to find a Bill;
Which being found, it was decreed
To summon him with all due speed
To come to Court, and not to tarry.

This message Brown was bid to carry.
King Noble, calling forth the Bear,
Quoth he: "Be cautious, and take care
How you proceed on this nice errand;
For Reynard is a Knave so arrant,
So full of wily tricks and lies,
He'll make you disbelieve your eyes."

"No, no," quoth Brown, "upon my oath,
My Liege, I should be very loth
To have it thought, that Reynard could
Cheat me with tricks; nay, if he would,
I'd make him smart for it so cruelly,
He never should forget it truly."







The First Summons

Argument

Brown, eager for the Honey-mart,
Is sorely dubb'd through Reynard's art.
Caught in a Cleft by head and paws,
He loses both his ears and claws,
Of which fell Reynard makes a sport.
The wounded bear limps back to Court.
King Noble and his Lords and Commons
Send to the Fox a second summons.

In highest spirits, Brown, that stout
And mighty man of war, set out.
O'er hills and mountains he with speed
Through woods and thickets did proceed,
Until he came to Malpertouse ;
For this was Reynard's fav'rite house,
To which he gave a preference,
As being fittest for defence.

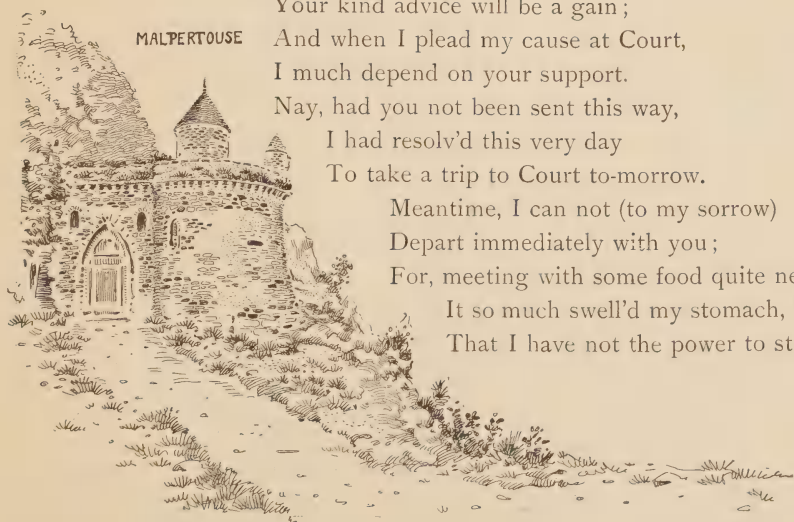
When Brown came there, he loudly knock'd
At th' outer-gate, which he found lock'd.

He bawl'd out with a dreadful din :
" I'm Brown, your cousin ; let me in.
A message from the King I bear
Of great importance, as you'll hear.
You are to come to Court with speed,
Your cause before the Lords to plead.
He vow'd that, if you disobey'd,
You should be either hang'd or flay'd.
Make haste to follow my advice."

Reynard thought, that a case so nice
Requir'd, before determination,
First a mature consideration.
" This bear," thought he, " speaks in a strain
So proud and bold, that I would fain
Bring down his pride." Sly Rankey then
Went to a back-room in his den ;
For Malpertouse, a war-like place,
Had many casemates, cover'd ways
And other strong-holds, which he could
Or shut, or open, as he would.
'Twas there he used to skulk away
From danger, and to hide his prey,
And beasts, which sometimes by foul hap
Came in, were caught there in a trap.
He first consider'd at full leisure
Brown's speech, which did not give him pleas-
ure ;
For he at first was much afraid
Of stratagem, or ambush laid ;
But when he was assur'd, that none
Were at the gate but Brown alone,

He banish'd all concern and fear,
 Unlock'd, and thus address'd the Bear:
 "My worthy cousin, welcome here!
 I'm glad to see you; pray, what cheer?
 Excuse my loit'ring above stairs;
 I just was at my evening pray'rs.
 My joy I scarcely can restrain;
 Welcome, my dear friend, once again!
 But those who sent you, Sir, did wrong;
 To you such service can't belong.
 Was there no messenger at hand,
 That our dread Sov'reign must command
 The Lord Chief Baron of his Court,
 A person of such high report,
 On journeys of such length to go?
 To me 'twill be worth much, I trow,
 That You vouchsaf'd to take that pain;

Your kind advice will be a gain;
 And when I plead my cause at Court,
 I much depend on your support.
 Nay, had you not been sent this way,
 I had resolv'd this very day
 To take a trip to Court to-morrow.
 Meantime, I can not (to my sorrow)
 Depart immediately with you;
 For, meeting with some food quite new,
 It so much swell'd my stomach, Sir,
 That I have not the power to stir."



"Pray, friend," quoth Brown, "what was your meat?"

"What signifies what poor folks eat?"

Quoth Reynard, "small fare, take my word;

You know, a beggar is no Lord.

When pantry nothing yields, nor churn,

A honey-comb must serve our turn.

On such I dined, the truth to tell ye,

And it is like to burst my belly.

I could not, but in case of need,

Resolve to eat such fare indeed.

At other times, for love or money,

I would not touch a bit of honey."

"Nay, friend," quoth Brown, "pray, have a care,

How you call honey poor men's fare.

Honey for Kings would be a treat,

In preference to any meat.

Get me a mess on't, and I'll strain

A nerve or two for you again."

"Friend Brown, you take me for a fool."

"Not I," quoth Brown, "upon my soul."

"Well then," quoth Reynard with a smile,

"We'll call on neighbour Rustyfile;

And since you are so fond of honey,

We'll get some, or for love or money."

These tempting words much pleas'd the Bear,
And hit his palate to a hair.

"Let us make haste," quoth he, "I pray,
And show me to the hives the way."

Quoth Reynard: "You shall have your will,
And freely own you've got your fill;

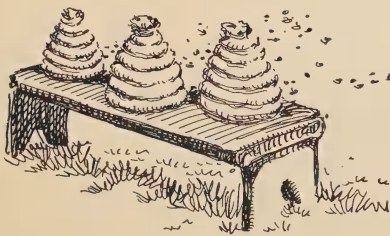
For though I can not walk with ease,
I'll do my best, a friend to please.
Of all relatives, Sir, to you
I wish to prove myself most true,
Convinc'd, that in return you'll grant
Your kind support, which I shall want.
Then let us here no longer tarry;
You shall get more than you can carry."

"I'll bring thee to a honey-mart,"
Thought Rankey, "which shall make thee
smart."

With such lies he the Bear deceiv'd,
Who like a simpleton believ'd,
And who was highly overjoy'd
When he the farmer's yard descriv'd.

When they came there, the day was fled,
And Rustyfile was gone to bed.
He was a Carpenter by trade;
An Oak-tree he on beams had laid,
And to split it he did intend
With wedges, driven in at th' end;
The timber gap'd near half an ell,
Which Reynard had observ'd full well.

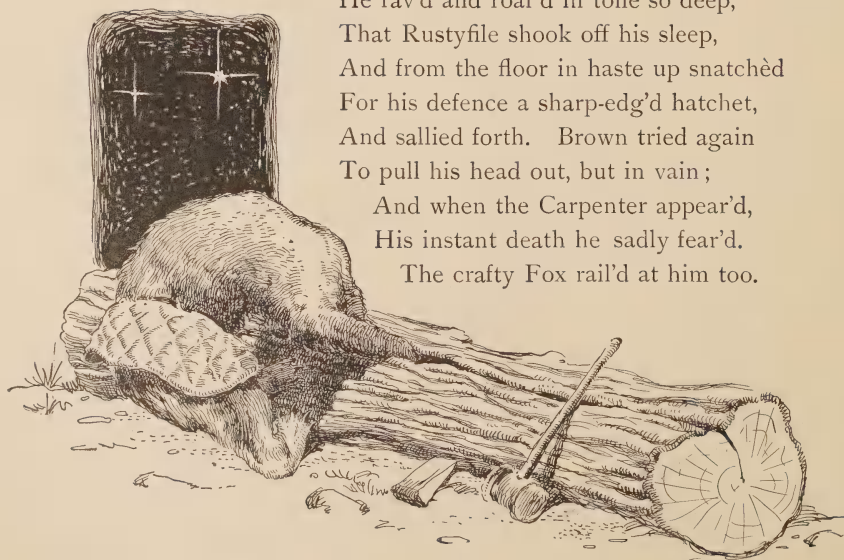
"Friend Brown, the gap here in this tree
Contains a swarm of bees," quoth he.



"'Tis full of honey; come, be speedy,
Pop in your head, but don't be greedy,
Lest you should get the belly-ache."

"No fear of that," quoth Brown; "don't take
Me, Sir, for such a silly creature;
I know the pow'rs of my own nature."

With both his fore-paws he stept in,
And over head and ears crept in,
Which Reynard watching, he pull'd out
In haste the wedges. Brown, the stout,
With head and paws, by foul mishap,
Was thus caught in a wooden trap,
And could not, though he took much pain,
His forehead disengage again.
He tugg'd and pull'd, and tore the ground,
And fill'd the air with yelling sound;
He rav'd and roar'd in tone so deep,
That Rustyfile shook off his sleep,
And from the floor in haste up snatchèd
For his defence a sharp-edg'd hatchet,
And sallied forth. Brown tried again
To pull his head out, but in vain;
And when the Carpenter appear'd,
His instant death he sadly fear'd.
The crafty Fox rail'd at him too.



“Pray, friend,” he ask’d him, “how d’ye do?
I hope you find the honey sweet;
Be cautious not too much to eat.
Here’s Rustyfile; I guess he’ll fill
A bumper for you, if you will.”
So Reynard, in a jeering strain,
Laugh’d at him, and ran off again.

When Rustyfile approach’d, and found
The Bear confin’d in wooden pound,
He to his neighbours ran about,
And in a hurry he call’d out:
“A Bear, my Lads, sits in my yard
Entrapt; come, let us tan his sward.”

They readily obey’d his call,
Took up their arms, and join’d him all.
One seiz’d a prong, the next a stake,
The third a flail, the fourth a rake.
The parish-clerk and sexton too
Came out, and join’d the war-like crew.
E’en black-eyed Moll, the Curate’s maid
(Who the best marrow-puddings made),
Snatch’d up her distaff, and away
She ran in haste, to join the fray.
When Brown their mighty pother heard,
He certain death most sadly fear’d;
And, mad with anguish and with pain,
One vig’rous pull he tried again,
And, at the cost of ears and claws,
His head he rescued and his paws;
But found, by loss of blood and skin,
He came not out, as he got in.

RUSTYFILE --



His head did ache, his paws were sore,
 And his face all bedaub'd with gore.
 In short, the honey which he got
 Was far from being sweet, I wot.

Rustyfile in the front attack'd him
 And many valiant Warriors back'd him;
 The Blacksmith, arm'd with iron crow,
 Dealt out to him a heavy blow;
 The villagers, with clubs and prongs,
 Their wives with broomsticks, rakes and tongs,
 The Curate too, with poker heavy,
 Came forth, and join'd the general levy;
 But most of all a man of high
 Descent and rank, hight Cucklerigh,
 Did gall him much; he was well known
 To fight best, when he was alone.
 Trulla, a lady of known fame,
 His mother was; his father's name
 We can not tell, but people prate
 Of th' ostler at the Bull and Gate.
 The Women too fell on his rear,
 Nor means to save him did appear,
 When, lo! an awkward, clumsy clown
 Struck, but too wide, to bring him down.

This blow so luckily escap'd,
 He straight among the Women leapt,
 And such a dreadful rout he made,
 That four of them, and Curate's maid,

Headlong into the river fell,
And piteously for help did yell.

The frighten'd priest began to bawl :
" Good folks, pray, save my housemaid Moll ;
Two Casks of Ale I promise you,
And twenty years' indulgence too.
Make haste, help, help, she's going down."

On this the Crowd abandon'd Brown,
To save the Women, whom all five
They brought on shore again alive.

Whilst thus he saw all hands employ'd,
A fit occasion Brown espy'd,
To get off to the river's brim.
He little thought that he could swim ;
But to escape more dreadful slaughter,
A gentler death he sought in water.
But better luck him there befell ;
He found he could swim pretty well.

When this the busy Crowd perceiv'd,
They fretted, and were sorely griev'd.
" It is," they cried, " the greatest shame,
That without hurt away he came.
'Tis all these meddling Women's fault,
Who wantonly would wage th' assault."
But when they found, that in the cleft
His ear and claws the Bear had left,
They call'd out : " Earless thief, come here,
You left in pawn your gloves and ear."

Brown, with the damage and the scoff,
Meantime was eager to get off,
He curs'd the tree, which took him in,
And robb'd him of his claws and skin;
Fell Reynard too, his foul betrayer,
H' included in his morning-prayer.
He with the current for awhile
Dropt down the river, near a mile;
And on the further bank, with pain
And toil, he limp'd on shore again,
Where he with heavy sigh and groan
His sad dry-basting did bemoan.

When Reynard him by subtle thought
Had to the Honey-market brought,
He to a hen-roost took his way,
And carried a fat fowl away,
With which he to the river bent
His course; and, while along he went,
He said: "It was a lucky thought,
That I this huffing braggard brought
To Rustyfile's. I'm sure he will
Salute him with his sharp-edg'd bill.
He was my foeman; but at last
He lies for it in durance fast.
He went for honey; but ere now
The Axe has done for him, I trow."
Thus musing, he was walking down
Along the river-side, where Brown

Lay couch'd. The unexpected sight
Of him did not give him delight.

"Oh Rustyfile, thou silly tool,"
Thought he, "thou art a mere Tom-fool.
Didst thou not care for such nice meat,
Which Dukes and Lords would wish to eat,
When straight into thy mouth it ran?
Thou arrant dolt and simpleton!"

So Reynard thought; but when he saw
That Brown was lacking ear and claw,
It pleas'd him well, and with a sneer
He ask'd: "Pray, friend, how came you here?
If you've left something with your host,
I straight away to him shall post,
And tell him where with you to meet.
Pray, did you find his honey sweet?
And did you handsomely pay for it?
But where have you bedaub'd your fore-
head?"

What doth the purple bonnet mean?
Are you an Abbot, or a Dean?
The bungler, who hath shav'd your crown,
Was surely a most clumsy clown;
For down your cheeks the red drops trickle.
Faith, you are in the strangest pickle."

Brown could no longer bear to hear
The railing rogue's provoking sneer,
Nor could he speak a word, for pain,
Much less return the jeer again.



He therefore, rather than to stay,
Resolv'd to take himself away ;
And trusting to the wave once more,
He swam across to th' other shore.
There, being out of breath, and spent,
His grief and sorrow he did vent :
" I could not, for the life of me,
Stir from this place an inch," thought he ;
" And yet I must jog on to Court,
Where my mischance will be the sport
Of every bant'ring ragamuffin,
Who will be rallying me and huffing.
That Caitiff, too, who did betray me,
Seem'd sorry that they did not slay me."
So saying, he did limp away,
And came to Court in great dismay.

When Noble saw the crippled Bear
In such a dismal plight appear,
He said : " For heaven's sake, is this Brown ?
What makes him look so much cast down ? "
" Cast down, indeed ! " quoth Brown, " You
see.

Reynard, that traitor, cheated me ;
Most basely have I been betray'd."

Quoth Noble : " Never be it said,
That such a man as you was shent,
Without severest punishment.
No, by this sceptre, which I bear,
And by my royal crown, I swear,

All damages the wretch shall pay
As high as ever you them lay;
And if I don't make good my word,
My spurs I'll forfeit and my sword."

This said, his Council he did call,
Enjoining strictly to them all,
To try the Fox for this offence,
Which seem'd to admit of no defence.

They all agreed, the best would be
(Not to neglect formality),
To summon him once more t' appear,
And that Gib should the message bear.
The King gave his assent to it;
For Gib did not want sense and wit.

This measure being fix'd upon,
Gib was call'd into Court anon.

"Mind," quoth King Noble, "what we say.
And to the Fox go straight away.
Tell him this is the second summons
Sent by Us, and our Lords and Commons,
Which, if he slights, We'll make him smart,
In spite of his malicious art.
On you We fix'd, because We knew
That he hath some regard for you."

Quoth Gib: "What purpose can it answer,
To send *me* to that crafty man, Sir?
I must obey, but still, to send
Some abler man, I'd recommend.

REYNARD THE FOX

You see, of person I'm but small :
If Brown, who is so stout and tall,
Could nor respect nor favour gain,
Pray, what can *I* from him obtain ? ”

Quoth Noble : “ *'Tis not by their size,
That numskulls differ from the Wise ;
For oft a dwarf is found as clever,
As any Giant whosoever.*

And though you are not strong nor tall,
Your good sense is allow'd by All.”

“ My Liege,” quoth Gib, “ your will be done !
If I discover, when I'm gone,
Some token on my right-hand side,
Good luck my journey may betide.”



Canto III



The Second Summons

Argument

Poor Gib into a trap is cheated,
And by the Curate rudely treated.
An Eye he loses in the fray.
The King is wroth. The badger, Gray,
To calm his anger, service proffers,
And to fetch Reynard, boldly offers.
Reynard sets out, and by the way
Confesses all his sins to Gray.

Gib sallied forth, and in a grove
He chanc'd to meet a cooing dove.
"All hail!" quoth he, "pray, take your flight,
My gentle bird, here to my *right*."
The dove took wing, alas! but she
Perch'd on his *left* upon a tree.
Poor Gib for fear began to quake,
As if his life was at the stake;
But soon recov'ring from his fright,
To Malpertouse he came at night,

GIB..



And putting on his fairest face,
 He said: "The King, out of his Grace,
 Greets you a second time, my friend;
 But you must straightway condescend
 Unto his palace to repair;
 Else he doth solemnly declare
 That you shall die, and all your race
 Shall suffer pain and dire disgrace."

Quoth Reynard: "Welcome, friend! I burn
 With Zeal, your Kindness to return."
 The rogue was thinking in his heart
 How he could act his knavish part,
 And give to Gib the same sad fare
 With which he had regal'd the bear.
 Smiling he ask'd: "What kind of meat
 Would you for supper like to eat?
 It is full late, methinks, to start;
 But in the morning we'll depart.
 On you with confidence I rest,
 In such a friend supremely blest.
 That braggart Brown came here in vain;
 For he talk'd in a blust'ring strain
 And 'twas impossible to go
 With such a bully, sir, you know,
 But with you, at first dawn of day,
 I readily will go away."

Gib answer'd: "No, I dare not waste
 Much time, let us set out in haste;

'Tis moonlight, and my great delight
Is walking in the cool of night."

"To walk so late at night," quoth he,
"Too dangerous for us would be.

*The man, who civilly would greet us
If he by day should chance to meet us,
Would give us quite a diff'rent treat,
Were we at midnight him to meet."*

"Well, then," said Gib, "if I must stay,
What shall we have for supper, pray?"

Quoth Reynard: "We can't offer much,
A poor man's fare, you know, is such
As he can get. We could contrive
To get some honey, fresh from th' hive:
I'm sure, you'll find it good and sweet."

"Honey," said Gib, "I never eat.
What else have you in your house?
If you could give me a fat mouse,
I should best like it for my fare;
But for your honey I don't care."

"Are you in earnest, friend?" quoth he.
"Twill be an easy thing for me
To show a place, where in a trice
You'll get a rich supply of mice.
Our Curate sorely doth complain,
That they destroy all his grain.
He lives just by; I'll show the way."

"Then let's make haste, and go, I pray,"

Quoth Gib; "no venison more nice
For me was ever found than mice."

Quoth Reynard: "If such is your will,
Of mice you soon shall get your fill;
Come, let us go without delay."

Poor silly Gib was glad t' obey.
On mice his appetite was bent,
And to the Curate's barn they went.

Reynard had lately broke a hole
Into the Curate's roost, and stole
His finest Cock. Young Robinet,
The Curate's son, a snare had set,
To catch the wily thief; but he
Had smelt a rat. "Come, Gib, you see
This hole," he said; "whilst you creep through,
I shall here keep strict watch for you;
And ere your sport is fairly ended,
You'll find how much you've been befriended."

Quoth Gib: "Is there no danger near?
I feel a strange degree of fear,
These priests are deep ones, Sir, you know."

"Why, then," said Reynard, "let us go;
For if you are so very shy,
Our wants at home we can supply.
We shall find something in my house,
Though not, perhaps, a nice fat mouse."

Gib, being half abash'd to hear
The railing rogue's malicious sneer,





Headlong he leapt into the snare.
(So Reynard's guests did always fare.)

When Gib perceiv'd that he was taken,
His courage terribly was shaken.
He pull'd and tore, and took much pain
To break the string, but all in vain;
The more he labour'd to get loose,
The tighter he but drew the noose.
Most piteously he mew'd with fear;
Which Rankey was rejoic'd to hear.
He ask'd him: "How d'ye like the mice,
Good Cousin? Are they fat and nice?
If this the priest knew, or his son,
That you feast on their venison,
Some pepper they would surely bring.
Is this your way at Court, to sing
At supper? Then, upon my soul!
I should be glad if in this hole
I saw the Wolf clapt up with thee,
For all the harm he did to me."

This said, in haste he ran away,
His wonted knavish tricks to play.
To Surly's den he did intend,
For wicked ends his course to bend.
From her he wanted to pump out
What Growler had complain'd about;
Her old affection too he would
Avail himself of, if he could.

But when he to the place was come,
 He only found her Whelps at home.
 "Tell Surly," said he, with a jeer,
 "Your daddy Reynard hath been here."

Surly at dawn of day return'd,
 When Reynard scarce his back had turn'd.
 She ask'd: "Did anybody call?"
 Her children said: "No one at all,
 Save Reynard, who the story told
 He was our Sire." "The rascal bold!"
 Said she; "woe shall this wretch betide,
 I'll run, and tan his ugly hide."
 With furious ire and rage she ranted;
 She knew the ways which Reynard haunted,
 And coming up with him, she said:
 "You wretch, how durst you to upbraid
 A mother in her children's face,
 By utt'ring of her things so base?"
 Whilst this she said, with visage grim
 She in a fury flew at him.
 He ran away in hasty flight;
 She follow'd him with all her might,
 Till they came to a ruin'd castle.
 There, in a wall of th' ancient bastil,
 Reynard a crevice did espy,
 Through which he slipt. Surly did try
 To follow him; but being tall

SURLY'S
 WHELPS



And fat, she stuck fast in the wall,
And could not, though she took much pain,
Push forward, or get back again,
And ere she disengag'd her head,
The daring cavalier was fled.

We leave him for awhile, to tell
What in the meantime Gib befell :
When he was caught (as we have said),
And piteously call'd out for aid,
Out of his bed leapt Robinet,
The youngster, who the snare had set.
He all the servants in the house
With joyful clamour went to rouse,
And striking fire, he made a pother,
To wake his father and his mother.
“Get up, the thief is caught,” he said,
“And for our Cock we'll now be paid.”

In haste they got up, great and small,
And round the Lad they gather'd all :
The Priest his nightgown donn'd ; amain
He headed all the war-like train.
Robin with pikestaff led the van,
And to belabour Gib began ;
The housemaid with her distaff gall'd him ;
The rest with diff'rent weapons maul'd him
The Curate too him rashly ply'd,
And with his poker him annoy'd



Till he almost beat out his eye.

When Gib saw he was doom'd to die,

He in a rage flew at the Priest,

Nor could his anger be appeas'd,

He bit and tore, and tugg'd and scratch'd,

And at his very vitals snatch'd.

The Priest set up a horrid yell,
And down in a deep swoon he fell.
The housemaid loud began to roar,
And with a solemn Oath she swore,
She would have giv'n her best cap
To have prevented this foul hap.

With doleful wailings they all led
The wounded Curate to his bed.
Gib watch'd this lucky circumstance,
Which offer'd for his life a chance,
And though his hide was sadly taw'd,
With tooth and nail he bit and claw'd,
Until he cut the string in twain.
He was glad to come off again,
And, creeping through the crevice: "Marry!"
Thought he, "'t is dang'rous here to tarry."
Without congee he went away,
And to the Court he bent his way.
When he appear'd, half blind and maim'd,
The King in a great rage exclaim'd;
"We'll punish that atrocious traitor,
And every aider and abettor."

A Crowd of new Complainants came,
His wrath and anger to inflame ;
But Gray got up, and said : " My Lords,
We've had enough here of high words ;
But Reynard must not be debarr'd
Of his due right of being heard.
You know, the law is very nice ;
A Freeman should be summon'd thrice.
If Reynard doth not then appear,
He is outlaw'd ; the case is clear."

Quoth Noble : " Pray, where will you find
A person in his sober mind,
Who'll venture on so vile an errand,
And carry to this rogue our warrant ? "

Quoth Gray : " Sir, I myself am here,
All ready to go without fear."
" 'Tis well," quoth Noble, " you may go.
The matters of complaint you know ;
But have a care how you behave
In dealing with the crafty knave."

" It is," said Gray, " a nice affair ;
But of success I don't despair."

Proceeding straight to Rankey's house,
He found him sitting with his spouse
And children. After civil greeting,
And courteous talk at their first meeting,
Quoth Gray : " My friend, your great renown
For wit and conduct is well known.



I'm therefore much surpris'd to find
How little you your int'rest mind.
To summon you, our sov'reign Lord
Already twice hath sent you word.
While y'are charg'd with a heavy crime,
Do not you think 'tis highest time
To come and plead your cause at Court,
And thus to quell each bad report?
What can you gain by tarrying?
If you are besieg'd by the King,
You know well, that you and your wife
And children risk your goods and life;
But if in open Court you meet
Your foes, you are of sly conceit,
And know so well to make your words,
That you will captivate the Lords.
Your conduct is so sly and wary,
That you'll confound your adversary;
I've seen you in the knottiest cases
Defy your foes to show their faces."

When Reynard had with much attention
Weigh'd every word, which Gray did mention,
Quoth he: "You're right in what you say;
I'll go with you at break of day.
I hope, my services are not
At Court yet totally forgot;
If I obtain an audience,
The King will pardon my offence;

For oft, when with his num'rous set
Of Privy-Counsellors he met,
In cases critical and nice
He always follow'd my advice ;
For 'tis allow'd, in politics
Nothing will serve but Reynard's tricks.
On that account the Courtiers all
Endeavour to contrive my fall ;
I know that there are more than ten
Lords of great note and pow'rful men,
Who wish to ruin me ; but still
Proceed to Court with you, I will.
I think it better to surrender,
Than wait till I'm condemn'd b'attainder,
And bring my children and my wife
In danger too of loss of life.
To sue for peace is better far
Than to wage an unequal war."

Reynard at parting told his spouse :
" Pray, mind our children and our house.
Before all, let me recommend
To little Rankey to attend ;
The whiskers round his little snout
Right prettily begin to sprout.
There's Russet, too, a cunning boy,
Whose antic tricks oft give me joy.
No sort of kindness let them lack ;
I'll thank you for't when I come back."

So saying, Reynard did depart,
And left her with a broken heart,
Quite destitute and left alone,
Her sad condition to bemoan.

When he had walk'd about a mile,
He said: "My friend, pray stop awhile.
I'm seiz'd with fear and anxious sorrow,
Lest I shall meet my death to-morrow,
And many sins my mind oppress,
Which I'm desirous to confess,
And since no other priest is near,
I wish that you would shrive me here."
"It is," said Gray, "a pious thought;
But your confession goes for nought,
Unless, determin'd to amend,
You of your thieving make an end."

Reynard replied: "I know this well;
Let me begin my sins to tell:
Confiteor tibi, Domine Pater,
Sum felo, nebulo, peccator —"

"What bogue is this," quoth Gray, "you
speak in?"

It sounds to me like a pig's squeaking:
Speak English with me, if you please,
That I may understand with ease."

"Well, I confess to you," quoth he,
"That many have been wrong'd by me



REYNARD'S
BABIES ...





First, I induc'd my cousin Brown
To go for honey to a Clown,
Who with a broken head did treat him,
And almost to a jelly beat him.

To Gib I promis'd a fat mouse,
And show'd him to the Curate's house;
But being taken in a snare,
They of an eye bereft him there.

The Cock, too, hath the greatest reason
To charge me with felonious treason.
In spite of Dogs and Cloister-wall
I kill'd his children almost all.

Nay, e'en against the King and Queen
A great offender I have been.

Were I to tell you how much wrong
I did to Growler, 'twould be long.
(I call him Cousin, Sir, but he
Hath never been a-kin to me.)
Some years ago, when I turn'd friar,
He begg'd of me to tell our Prior
He likewise wish'd t'increase our flock,
And to put on a friar's frock,
Which, as he thought, would suit him well.
I sent the fool to toll the bell.
And with delight he toll'd so loud,
That he rais'd all the village-crowd,
And though he strove to let them know,
That he was come to make his vow,

They fell with cudgels on the sot,
And nearly kill'd him on the spot.
When he was to receive his tonsure,
He begg'd me to become his sponsor;
I singed his noddle till the skin
Did crack, and broil'd his brains within.

A number of such tricks I play'd him;
For to a fish-pond once I led him,
But there, instead of catching trout,
He was serv'd with a cudgel-bout.

Soon after this, he in a village
The parson's larder meant to pillage,
Which was well stor'd with butcher's meat.
I promis'd him a dainty treat;
But my intent was to betray him,
And make the country-people slay him.
Through a small cranny in the wall,
I made him slip into the stall,
Where, getting at a trough of meat,
He so voraciously did eat,
That he could not, though he would fain,
Get through the cranny out again.

The Curate in his parlour sat;
A roasted capon, nice and fat,
Was plac'd before him, which to snatch
From him th' occasion I did watch,
And ran off with in a hurry.
The priest, all in a rage and flurry,

Got up as fast as he was able,
And, oversetting chair and table,
And drink and victuals on the floor,
In haste he ran up to the door.
To his domestics loud he call'd,
And: 'Stop the daring thief,' he bawl'd,
'Who, whilst I sat, to eat my meal,
My supper hath presum'd to steal.'

I ran off with my prey apace,
Till I came to the very place
Where Growler panted in his coop;
And there my booty I did drop.
The Curate, stooping for the fowl,
Perceiv'd him, scowling like an Owl.
'Look here, my trusty lads,' he cried,
'Another thief I have descried;
In troth, we should be made the scoff
Of all the Shire, if he got off.'

In short, he set up such a rout,
That all his villagers came out,
And charg'd the Wolf with blows severe,
The Curate's bacon cost him dear.
But when their fury did subside,
They flung the mangled wretch aside.



I wonder how he could escape,
And get alive out of the scrape.

A twelvemonth since, he came to call,
And court my friendship after all,
And his request he did express,
To get him of young fowl a mess.
I seiz'd th' occasion by the lock,
And told him that a fine young Cock
And six hens on a roost I knew
(But not a word of this was true).
'Twas midnight when I led him on,
And through a trap-door I anon
To a high beam did show him up.
When he was got up to the top,
And found no fowl, he call'd to me:
'Friend, not a feather do I see;
I fear that we have been betray'd.'

'No, get but farther on,' I said;
'You know, that those who want to gain,
No labour ought to shun, nor pain;
Therefore let not your faith be shaken;
The foremost fowl I've long since taken.'
Whilst he crept on, I did slide back,
And dropp'd the trap-door with a clack.
Growler was frightened with the sound,
And down he tumbled to the ground.
The servants, who slept in the hall,
Were waken'd by the sudden fall;

They ran together in a flurry,
And lighting candles in a hurry,
They came to see what was the matter,
And what had caused the noise and clatter;
And you may judge, that many a wound
And bruise he got, when he was found.

On Surly likewise, his fair Dame,
Great scandal I have brought, and shame,
Which to redress, I fear, she will
Find it full hard and difficile.

Of all these misdeeds I repent
With feelings truly penitent,
And will do penance with contrition,
If you'll absolve me from perdition."

Gray from a willow cut a wand,
And gave it into Rankey's hand.
"Take this, and dropping on your knee,
Strike yourself with it thrice," quoth he;
"Then laying on the ground the rod,
Across it skip three times unshod,
And kiss the rod with resignation,
To witness your humiliation.
This done, your conscience stands acquitted
Of all the sins you have committed."

When Reynard had his penance done,
Gray thus exhorted him anon:
"Take care, in all your future days,
To leave your former wicked ways.



Hear mass, keep fast and holiday;
Bring those to right, who go astray;
Be kind to all the sick and poor,
And you'll get in at heaven's door."

"I shall," quoth Reynard, "night and day
Look to my conduct, as you say."

This bus'ness being brought about,
Again together they set out.
At some small distance from their way
A Convent of fair virgins lay.
These pious sisters pray'd and sung
All day, and eke the night along,
To save their souls; but to sustain
Their bodies, too, did not disdain.
Cock, hen and turkey, goose and rabbit,
With them the cloister did inhabit,
Which crafty Reynard knew full well,
Who, therefore, to his friend did tell,
That passing by the Cloister-wall
Was not out of their way at all.
The cunning rogue the poultry ey'd,
And a fat capon he espied,
On whom he suddenly did rush,
And all his feathers made to flush.

Gray said to him with angry flout:
"You sinner, what are you about?
When, after making your confession,
To mend your life you made profession,

Is 't meet that for a paltry fowl
You risk again to damn your soul?"

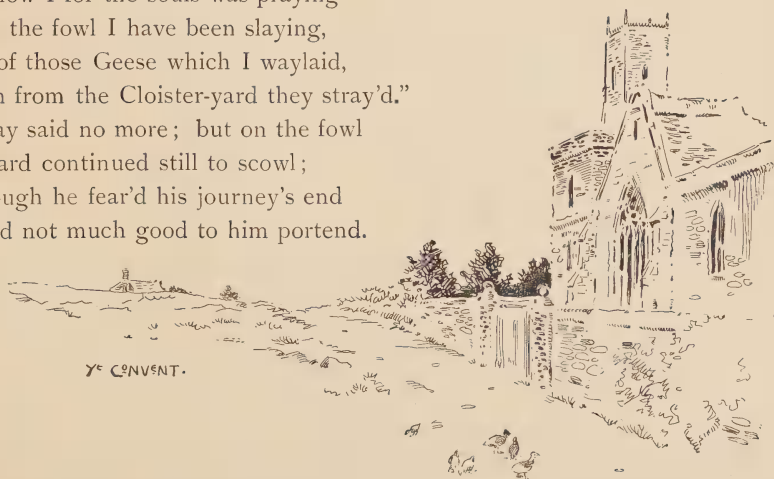
"It was a sad mistake," said he,
"From an old habit. Pardon me,
And henceforth I shall evermore
Be careful to do so no more."

Into the road again they struck;
But Reynard could not help to look
On the fine fowl with wistful eye,
As long as he could them descry;
Nay, if one had cut off his head,
It to the poultry would have fled.

Gray, who observ'd his greedy yearning,
Exclaim'd by way of past'ral warning:
"What means this eager, craving look?"

"My meaning, Sir, you much mistook;
And thus to interrupt," said Reynard,
"My pious thoughts, good sir, is main hard.
Just now I for the souls was praying
Of all the fowl I have been slaying,
And of those Geese which I waylaid,
When from the Cloister-yard they stray'd."

Gray said no more; but on the fowl
Reynard continued still to scowl;
Although he fear'd his journey's end
Would not much good to him portend.





Part II Canto I

The Trial

Argument

Reynard his enemies confutes,
And all their arguments refutes.
At last, however, he's convicted,
And death, of course, to be inflicted.
Leave for to shrive him being got,
He throws out hints about a plot ;
Of which full notice to receive,
King Noble grants him a reprieve.

When fame had spread the report,
That Reynard was arriv'd at Court,
All folks, to see him, flock'd together.
And Great and Small did round him gather.
Crowds of accusers he did find,
But did not seem them much to mind ;
For with his nephew he walk'd on
As proudly as a Nabob's son,
And without showing marks of fear,
When in the Court he did appear.

Among the Lords he took his place,
And, putting on a better face
Than his bad conscience would befit,
He thus began the case to split:

“My Liege,” he said, “a more observant,
Faithful, and trusty humble servant
You have not in the world than *me*;
And although some folks there may be
Who of your favour would bereave me,
You are too wise not to believe me,
That all they said behind my back
Was nought but sheer malicious clack.
They hate me, Sir, for being true
And faithfully attach’d to you.”

“Avaunt with your vile flattery!”
Quoth Noble, “’twill not do with me.
How you have kept my peace we know,
And you shall pay for it, I vow.
There’s Chanticleer, whom you bereft
Of all his children by your theft.
You say you love me? ’Tis a lie;
To hurt me you would rather try,
Which by your late exploits appears;
Gib lost an eye, and Brown his ears,
I’ll not waste time now, to harangue you;
We shall have proof enough to hang you.”

“Am I,” quoth Reynard, “to be blam’d
Because Brown hath been bruised and maim’d?

Who bade the glutton, without money,
 To go to Rustyfile's for honey?
 Why did he suffer him to maul
 His limbs? Is he not stout and tall?
 And could he not defend his hide
 Ere he skulk'd to the river-side?

Gib, too, was by me well receiv'd;
 If my advice he had believ'd,
 He would not for a paltry mouse
 Have ventur'd to the Curate's house.
 If for his gluttony he paid,
 The fault should not to *me* be laid.
 I know, sir, you can punish me,
 However guiltless I may be,
 For you have pow'r and I am weak;
 But (if so boldly I may speak)
 You would not, by inflicting pain
 On th' Innocent, much honour gain.
 Let my accusers now appear;
 To answer them I'm ready here."

Simple, the Ram, Clerk of the hall,
 For the complainants now did call.
 In came Sir Growler, Brown the bear,
 The wild cat Gib, and Puss the hare;
 The Ox, the Goat, and all their kin.
 Beau Frisky too came wheedling in.
 From woods and forests Stag and Deer,
 Martin and Rabbit did appear.



SIMPLE.

CLERK OF HALL---



E'en feather'd folks made no delay,
The Goose, the Duck, the Rook, and Jay,
While Chanticleer, before them all,
For vengeance loud began to call.

Great was the noise, and great the pother;
One would be heard before the other,
All striving to be first that day
To take fell Reynard's life away.
Much able pleading one might hear
From birds and beasts and fallow-deer;
But Reynard in his turn no less,
By cross-exam'ning witnesses,
By artful speech, by nice exceptions,
And many other sly conceptions,
To the surprise of all the Court,
Did on his enemies retort.

He had well-nigh with his comments
Confuted all their arguments,
When, lo! a witness did appear,
Who made at once the case so clear,
That he left Reynard no defence.
On summing up the evidence,
Forthwith the Jury with one breath
Brought in their verdict: Guilty, death.
The Judge then, with a solemn face,
Pronounc'd the sentence: "With disgrace,
You, Reynard, to the gallows led,
Shall hang, till you are dead, dead, dead."



Now his proud heart began to fail him
 And cunning speech did not avail him,
 For Noble sign'd the sentence straight,
 And certain death did him await.

The news of Reynard's condemnation
 Fill'd every kinsman and relation
 (Whose number at the Court was great)
 With grief and sorrow for his fate.
 The monkey Pug, the Badger Gray
 (Great Law- and Church- men till that day)
 And others, could not help to fret,
 That Reynard, a Knight banneret,
 Should be doom'd by the hangman's noose
 His honour and his life to lose;
 They took his case so much to heart,
 That from the Court they did depart.

To find that many a valiant Squire
 And trusty Yeoman did retire,
 Caus'd to King Noble much regret;
 He told his Courtiers in a pet:
 "Though Reynard is a rogue, 'tis true
 That his friends still deserve their due;
 A set of able hands they are,
 Whom we in Council ill can spare."

Meantime the Wolf and his relations
 To hang the Fox made preparations.
 Quoth Gib to Growler: "Well you may
 Your thirst for vengeance now allay.

Remember how he did with joy
Assist your brethren to destroy,
When those who hang'd them he did join;
Pay him now in his own false coin.
You too, friend Brown, were made to smart,
When brought by him to th' honey-mart.
Take your revenge now, while you may,
And do not let him steal away."

Quoth Growler: "Without loitering,
Get me a rope, and he shall swing."

Reynard said nothing, while they spoke.
At last his silence thus he broke:

"You all are mighty fond of words.
Instead of talking about cords,
If you thirst for revenge, depend on't
The best way is to make an end on't.
Gib, I am sure, hath not forgot
Where a good rope is to be got,
If he'll think of the Curate's barn.
You, Brown and Growler, think you'll earn
Much honour and great consolation
By bringing shame on your relation."

The King and Queen with all their train
Meanwhile appear'd upon the plain,
Where gaping crowds were met to see
His Exit on the fatal tree.

Growler bade all his friends stand fast,
And watch the culprit to the last.

SURLY.



He therefore call'd out to his wife :
 " Hold him fast, if you love your life ;
 For if the rogue could get away,
 He'd ruin all of us one day."
 To Brown he did enjoin the same,
 While Gib, who with a ladder came,
 Climb'd in a trice up to the top,
 With rope in hand, to tuck him up.

When Brown and Surly held him fast,
 Reynard saw he must breathe his last ;
 But he could not forbear to scoff.
 He said : " You never will leave off
 Helping to death your near relation,
 Though you should have commiseration,
 And not bring me into disgrace.
 Nay, I could almost ask for grace ;
 But Growler hates me to the last.
 He bids his wife to hold me fast,
 Who, if old friendship she would mind,
 Would surely be to me more kind.
 But since with me 'tis so far gone,
 I wish the whole affair was done.
 My father died a violent death ;
 But in a trice he spent his breath,
 And had not such a copious train
 To view his agony and pain.
 Make haste, and let me take the swing ;
 Shame on you for your loitering ! "

“Hear, how the caitiff rails,” quoth Brown.
“We’ll take the daring huffer down.”

Reynard, howe’er, thought in his mind:
“I’ll not despair some means to find,
From an untimely death t’ escape,
And bring my foes into the scrape.
The King (’tis true) is not my friend;
And many, whom I did offend,
Are wishing for my death; but still,
Be they as clever as they will,
I shall contrive to overreach
Them all by dint of subtle speech,
And if a hearing I can gain,
My pardon I hope to obtain.”
Much grief and sorrow he express’d,
And thus the gaping crowd address’d:
“Having the Lord’s commands contemn’d,
To death I justly am condemn’d.
I meet my death with heart contrite,
And wish but for a short respite,
That I my conscience may appease,
Confess my sins, and die with ease,
Because such misdeeds I committed,
That, if to tell them I omitted,
The Innocent in future times
Might chance to suffer for my crimes.
For this last mercy at death’s door,
I wish you would the King implore.”

Those who his canting speech did hear
To pity him could not forbear,
And thinking it a trifling thing,
They interceded with the King,
Who their request benignly granted.

Reynard, obtaining what he wanted,
His spirits quickly rose again,
And speaking in his whining strain,
“*Spiritus Domini* be with me!”

He said; “for those, whom here I see,
Both poor and rich, both great and small,
Too frequently I’ve injured all.
Since I was wean’d from mother’s breast,
The craft of thieving I profess’d.
With lambs and kids I used to play,
Because I found their bleats so gay;
But when their blood I once had lapt,
I often at their throats have snapt,
And growing by degrees more daring,
Nor fowl, nor beast have I been sparing;
Nay, frequently I did kill more
Than I was able to devour.

Growler likewise, in course of time,
Inur’d me in the art sublime
Of wholesale theft and robbery.
We were together constantly;
He stole the great, and I the small,
And we were to go snacks in all.



But when he caught a calf, or kid,
Or something else, as nice and tid,
I seldom got my share from him;
For straight at me with visage grim
He snarl'd and frighten'd me away,
And to himself he kept his prey.
Nay, when a bullock, or a horse
We chanc'd to kill, it was still worse;
For then his wife and children came,
Who each of them a share did claim,
And I was left to vex and fret,
Ere I a bone from them could get.

A lucky thing it was indeed,
That I stood not of them in need,
Because the treasure I possess,
From want secur'd me and distress."
"What treasure," ask'd the King, "was this?"

"My Liege, I'll tell you what it is,"
Quoth Reynard; "for what treasure can
Yield comfort to a dying man?
Ten wagons would not, I dare say,
Suffice to carry them away;
But howsoever great they be,
I cannot take them now with me.
I stole these treasures with my wife;
By stealing them, we sav'd your life;
For this great hoard was made by those
Who would against your life have rose.



Now you are safe, while I must smart,
Because it broke my father's heart."

The Queen was very much astonish'd,
And earnestly she him admonish'd.
"Reynard," she said, "I conjure you,
In your confession to be true,
And as you wish to save your soul,
Minutely to declare the whole,
Which on these matters can throw light."

The King straight granted a respite;
For he wish'd very much to learn
How far these things him might concern.

His matters now in better train,
Reynard began to breathe again;
His foes were forc'd to let him loose
From vile embrace of fatal noose.
The King and Queen took him apart,
And he made use of all his art
Their good opinion to regain,
And get out of the scrape again.
With matchless art his tale he told,
And gave his foes the bag to hold.

The Queen exhorted him again
All matters fully to explain.

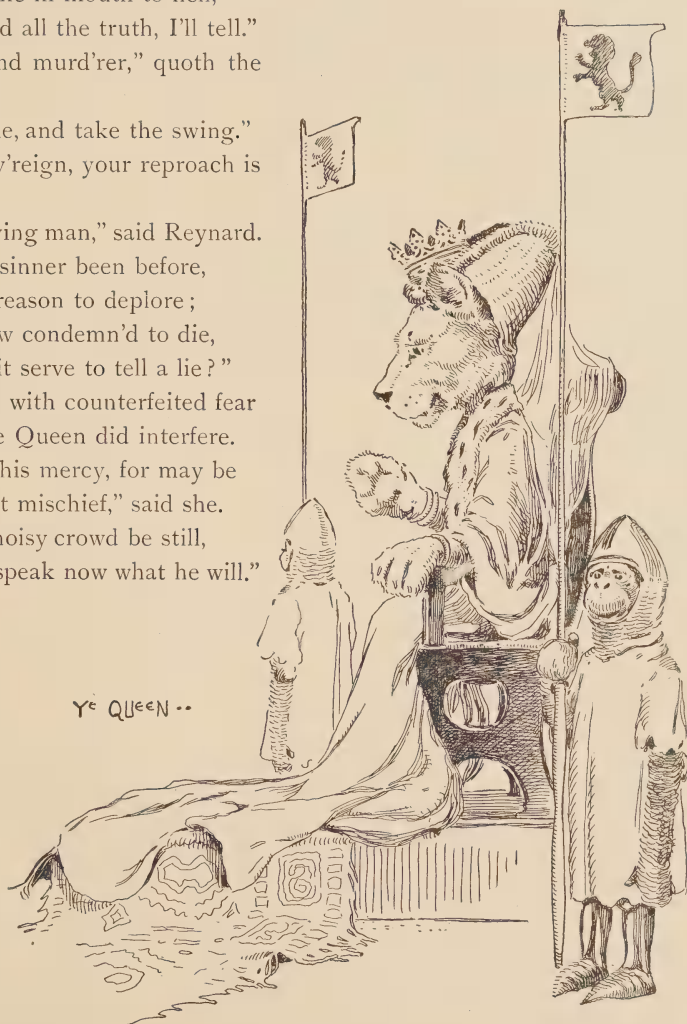
Quoth he: "I'm doom'd to die, you know.
Why should I charge my conscience now
With lies and foul prevarication,
And bring my soul into damnation?"

I'm loth to speak ill of my kin ;
But, rather than commit a sin,
And go with lie in mouth to hell,
The truth, and all the truth, I'll tell."

"A thief and murd'rer," quoth the
King,
"Will tell a lie, and take the swing."
"Dread sov'reign, your reproach is
hard

For a poor dying man," said Reynard.
"That I've a sinner been before,
I have great reason to deplore ;
But being now condemn'd to die,
What would it serve to tell a lie?"

While thus with counterfeited fear
He spoke, the Queen did interfere.
"Grant him this mercy, for may be
It will prevent mischief," said she.
"Bid all the noisy crowd be still,
And let him speak now what he will."





The Pardon

Argument

The crafty Fox cannot refrain
From fibs, his kinsmen to arraign.
Vast treasures he pretends to show
At Quarrelpit and Hufferslow.
When pardon'd he by dint of lies
For leave to go to Rome applies.
The King commends his resolution
To go, and beg for absolution.

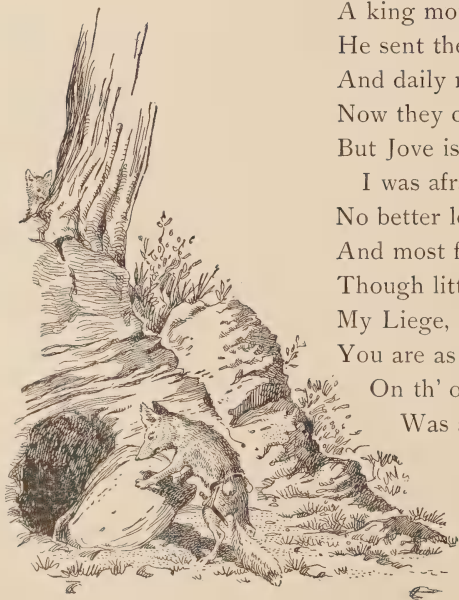
As soon as silence was obtain'd,
Much grief and sorrow Reynard feign'd,
That his own kin he durst not spare,
A shocking treason to declare ;
Nor did the wicked rogue disdain
His father in the grave t'arraign ;
Nay, his best friend, the badger Gray,
Who took his part that very day,
He did not scruple to accuse :
For while his friends he did abuse,



To hurt his foes, the wily thief
The sooner hop'd to gain belief.

He said : " My father heretofore
A hidden treasure did explore,
Which was left by a Saxon King
(I think 'twas Edgar Atheling).
When all at once he got such riches,
His head was fill'd with proud caprices,
And he assum'd a haughty air
With all those who about him were.
By Gib he sent up word to Brown,
Straight from the Highlands to come down
If he wish'd to become our King.
Brown, well pleas'd with his offering,
Made as much haste as e'er he could
To meet my father in a Wood.
To Growler they sent word that day,
And to our learned cousin Gray.
Gib was the fifth, who join'd the set,
And in the dark of night they met.
There, at the devil's instigation,
They enter'd into conjuration.
To murder You they all did swear
And for their King to choose the bear.
My father hinted his intent
To purchase votes in Parliament,
And with his gold to silence those
Who might their trait'rous plan oppose.

Some notice of their plot one day
I got by chance. My nephew Gray,
Too freely having drank his glass,
Told his wife what would come to pass;
But bade her, as she lov'd her life,
Not to tell tales. But soon my wife
Did learn the truth, and told me all;
And by some tokens I withal
Was soon convinc'd, it was too true
That plots were making against You.
This did remind me of the Frogs,
Who peaceably liv'd in their bogs;
But while they had a gentle King,
They could not leave off murmuring,
And praying Jove to send them down
A king more worthy of the Crown.
He sent the Stork, who much annoys them,
And daily murders and destroys them.
Now they complain, and sore repent;
But Jove is deaf to their complaint.
I was afraid, that after all
No better lot would us befall;
And most for *Your* sake I did fret,
Though little thanks I'm like to get.
My Liege, I knew your gentle mood;
You are as pow'rful, as Y'are good;
On th' other hand, I knew that Brown
Was a proud, craving, blust'ring Clown.



It therefore did occur to me,
How ruinous such change would be,
For 'tis a cruel, cutting thing,
When a proud Knave is made a King.
I therefore studied, night and day,
A counterplot for them to lay.

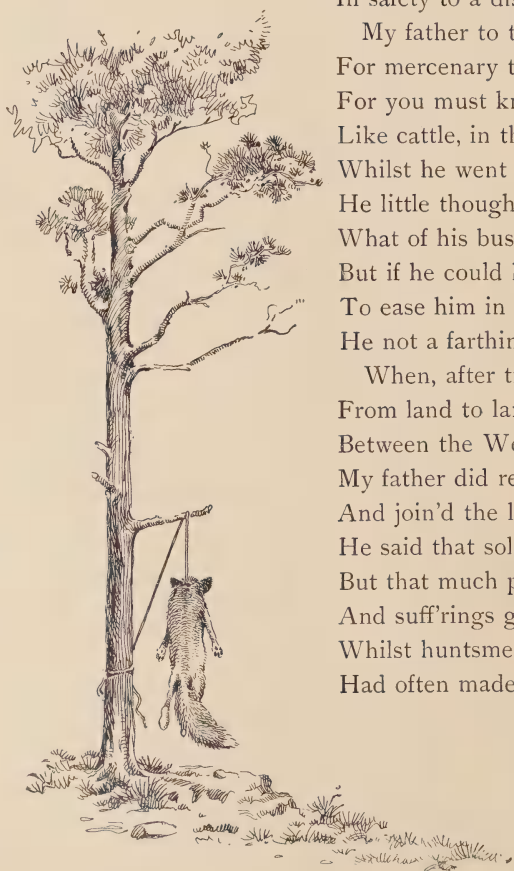
Henceforth I ponder'd on a measure,
To rob my father of his treasure,
In order to prevent all strife,
And save your crown and precious life.
Wherever my old wicked Sire
Did stroll about, through mud and mire,
Through heat and frost, with all my might
I at his heels was day and night.
One day, spent with fatigue and sorrow,
While I was lying in a burrow,
I saw my father, who did creep
Out of a cavern, dark and deep.
He look'd about with cautious fear,
But did not see that I was near,
When, thinking he was quite alone,
The cleft he cover'd with a stone ;
His footsteps too he did not fail
To smooth again with snout and tail.

Old slyboots was no sooner gone,
Than I did fall to work anon,
Convinc'd that this must be the place
Where all his riches I should trace ;

And sure, when I slipt in, I found
Of pure gold many a thousand pound.
Not one here present is so old
As to have seen such heaps of gold
And precious stones. I did not tarry
For carts; my wife help'd me to carry,
Until the whole of it we got
In safety to a distant spot.

My father to the Continent
For mercenary troops was sent;
For you must know, brave men were sold
Like cattle, in those times, for gold.
Whilst he went on this toilsome job,
He little thought that thieves would rob
What of his bus'ness was the nerve;
But if he could have made it serve
To ease him in his dying-stound,
He not a farthing would have found.

When, after trudging up and down
From land to land, from town to town,
Between the Weser and the Mayne,
My father did return again,
And join'd the leaders of the plot.
He said that soldiers he had got,
But that much pain to him it cost,
And suff'rings great from heat and frost,
Whilst huntsmen with their yelping pack
Had often made his sward to crack.





He show'd them letters, which he brought,
With promises and offers fraught
From Growler's friends, who would not fail
To fight for him with tooth and nail,
In concert with the cats and bears,
Ready t' engage in his affairs,
And to assist their Kinsman, Brown ;
If three months' wages were paid down.
(But you may thank your lucky star,
That I their deep-laid plots did mar.)

When all these matters were concerted,
My father to his hoard reverted ;
But what above, what under ground,
The more he sought, the less he found.
He fill'd with loud laments the air,
And hang'd himself from mere despair.

Thanks to my cunning, at one blow
I all their schemes did overthrow ;
Then pray, consider my disgrace ;
Whilst Brown stands high in your good grace,
And Growler too, and their abettors,
Poor Reynard here stands bound in fetters.
Sir, to give up my Sire was hard,
But harder to get such reward."

The King and Queen, who both to fish
In troubled water much did wish,
Took him aside, and he was bid
To tell them where his gold was hid.



Quoth he: "What would it help me now,
My treasures to the King to show,
Who wants to hang me, and believes
What traitors tell of me and thieves?"

"No," said the Queen, "pray, cease your care,
I'm sure the King your life will spare,
And if you promise to be good,
He will forgive, and change his mood,
And will restore to you his Grace."

"If this," said Reynard, "be the case,
That I my pardon shall obtain,
And win the King's good Grace again,
With greater riches I shall store him
Than any King possess'd before him."

"Do not believe him," said the King,
'Tis nought but wicked bantering,
He is a lying, scoffing thief,
Who never did deserve belief."

"I grant he hath been so before,"
Said she; "but he will lie no more;
For when this plot he did reveal,
His father's name he might conceal,
As well as that of his friend Gray,
If he had wish'd the blame to lay
On those alone by whom he's hated."

The King, whose anger was abated,
Replied: "Although the case is nice,
I will for once take your advice.

His fine and trespass I'll forgive him,
And on your word I will believe him.
But on my Crown and life I swear,
If he takes not the greatest care
How he behaves in future times,
He shall pay doubly for his crimes,
And all his kin, as well as he,
Shall suffer till the tenth degree."

Reynard was highly glad, to find
The King so soon had chang'd his mind.
"I should act foolishly, My Lord,"
Said he, "if I but spoke one word,
Which I could not by act and deed
Make good, as soon as there is need."

The King, who thought that he spoke true,
Forgave him, and his father too ;
And thus from a most dang'rous scrape
He through his cunning did escape.

"God save Your Majesty!" said he.
"To serve You well, my aim shall be,
As well as your most gracious Consort,
Who hath procur'd me so much comfort ;
And therefore none with greater pleasure
I would invest with my vast treasure.
You shall possess it as entire
As I have stole it from my Sire,
And I will now, as I am bid,
Tell you the place where it is hid :

Far in the North, Sir, please to know,
 A desert lies, call'd Hufferslow.
 None but the Rook, the Owl, and Jay
 Inhabit there. Nor beasts of prey,
 Nor human-kind, did ever trace
 The way to this wild, dreary place.
 A miry swamp, hight Quarrelpit,
 Is in the very midst of it.
 For further token please t' observe
 (That from your path you may not swerve;
 For to yourself I would advise
 To set out on this enterprise,
 And not to trust to messengers
 For managing such nice affairs.)
 Just after you pass Quarrelpit,
 A little to the left of it
 You will find two young lofty pines;
 Beneath them I have sunk the mines,
 Where I my treasure hoarded up.
 There many a bracelet, ring and cup
 You'll find, as well as Ath'ling's crown,
 Which was to have been worn by Brown,
 If he his wicked will had got,
 And I had not blown up his plot.
 You'll eke see many jewels there
 Of precious stones and Goldsmith's ware,

Ye TREASURE...

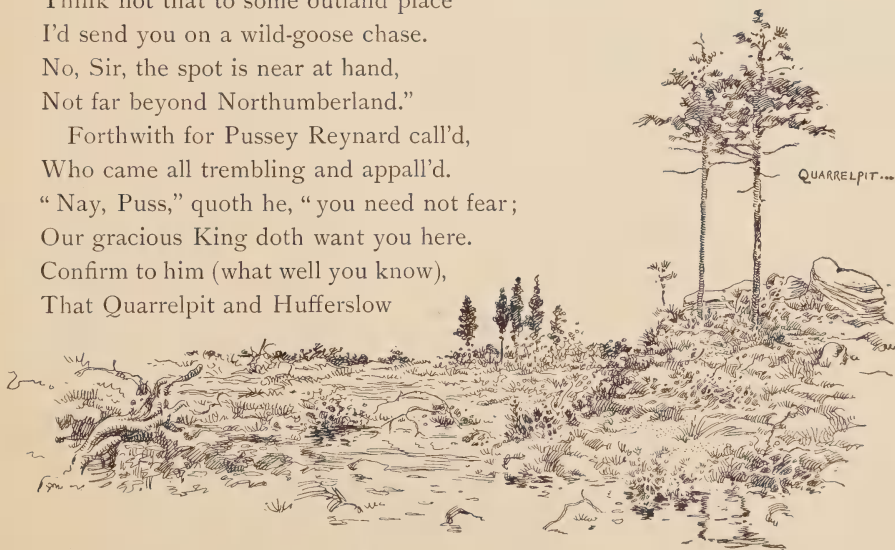


Worth many thousand pounds to you.
My Liege, when all these things you view,
They will rejoice your very heart.
'Reynard,' you'll say, 'indeed thou art
As shrewd and true as Fox can be,
Hoarding such treasures up for me.' "

"Come with us then, and show the way,"
Said Noble, "and full well you may,
Unless this story, with intent
To trick and cheat us, you invent.
We've read in our Geography
Of Brentford, Staines and Coventry;
But Quarrelpit and Hufferslow
Are names of which we nothing know."

"My Liege," quoth Reynard, "your surmise
Fills me, indeed, with much surprise.
Think not that to some outland place
I'd send you on a wild-goose chase.
No, Sir, the spot is near at hand,
Not far beyond Northumberland."

Forthwith for Pussey Reynard call'd,
Who came all trembling and appall'd.
"Nay, Puss," quoth he, "you need not fear;
Our gracious King doth want you here.
Confirm to him (what well you know),
That Quarrelpit and Hufferslow



Are situate in brakes and fens,
About a hundred miles from hence."

"Why, yes," quoth Puss, "for ought I know,
Near Quarrelpit lies Hufferslow,
Where humpback'd Simon with his Croney
Liv'd in the woods, and coin'd base money.
I oft was there in great distress,
When hunger, frost and hounds did press —"

"Enough!" said Reynard, "you may go;
The King wants nothing more to know."

"'Tis well," quoth Noble, "be content;
A word in haste is not ill meant;
Then come away with us, and show
The nearest way to Hufferslow."

"I would," said Reynard, "wish t' obey;
But for my sins I here must stay.
You would not take with you a man
On whom the Pope pronounc'd his ban.
Once, at the devil's instigation,
Growler express'd an inclination
To slip into a friar's gown;
But after they had shav'd his crown,
The glutton was not satisfied
When six lay-brothers him supplied
With meat and drink; but he again
Of thirst and hunger would complain.
I thought he was in great dismay,
And help'd the wretch to run away.

For this the Pope his ban inflicted,
And to this hour I'm interdicted.
With your permission I would now
To Rome for pardon wish to go.
From thence, if I your leave may crave,
I'll wander to the holy grave,
And plenary indulgence bring,
Both for myself and for my King.
Were I with you to go away,
I'm sure, malicious tongues would say:
'A fine companion for a King,
This fox, who just escap'd the string,
And who is interdicted too!'
No, no, my Liege, 'twill never do."

"If this," said Noble, "is the case,
It surely would be a disgrace
To take you with me, and I must
Some other with this job intrust.
I will not mar a good intent,
And since to Rome your course is bent,
I hope your pilgrimage will mend you.
Heav'n's blessing on the way attend you!"

PUSS...





Canto III

The Relapse

Argument

Reynard makes the wolves their shoes,
And Brown part of his fur-coat lose.
The Ram gives him his benison
And puts the rogue his knapsack on.
He kills poor Puss, and with the Ram
Sends to the King her head for sham.
The guiltless Ram and all his kin
Are made to pay for Rankey's sin.

King Noble, mounted on a stone,
Which serv'd him for a royal Throne,
Made every bird and beast around
Perch on trees, or squat on the ground,
Save Reynard, who with courtly grace
Behind the Queen's seat took his place;
And with a voice distinct and loud
He thus harangued the num'rous crowd:
"Be't known to all assembled here,
To Bird and Beast, to Fowl and Deer,

To poor and rich, to great and small,
And to our loyal subjects all,
That by our sovereign pow'r and sway
We our free pardon grant to-day
To Reynard, whom the law did sentence
To death, but having show'd repentance,
And faithfully disclos'd a thing
Of great importance to his King,
We, for the sake of this confession,
And of our Consort's intercession,
All punishment and fine forgive him,
And at our Court again receive him.
Besides, it is our royal will,
That all of you respect him still,
Himself, his children and his wife,
And as you love your limbs and life,
Let every one of you refrain
Of past offences to complain.
He hath done wrong, but he'll repent.
To go to Rome is his intent,
And on his pilgrimage to-morrow
He will set out with pious sorrow.
From Rome he'll go, with staff in hand,
A Palmer to the holy land,
And won't return to us again,
Till full indulgence he obtain."

Gib now cried out: "W' are all forlorn;
I wish I never had been born.



If into favour he again

Hath stole, the rogue with might and main
Will strive to ruin us all three,
Growler as well as Brown and me.
Of one eye he did last bereave me;
I fear, the other he won't leave me."

Growler said, "Good advice is dear."
"So 'tis indeed," said Brown, "I fear."
With grief and terror much oppress'd,
These two the King and Queen address'd
And made of Reynard strange report.

King Noble sternly cut them short,
"Were not you plainly told by me,
That I have pardon'd him?" said he;
And forthwith, in an angry mind,
He order'd them to be confin'd;
For Reynard's slanderous information
Had drawn on them his indignation.

The rogue, perceiving that his art
Serv'd him so well, pluck'd up a heart,
And fell designs he plann'd amain,
To give his enemies new pain.

"Most kind and gracious Queen," quoth he,
"Your pilgrim I shall shortly be;
But for my long and toilsome jaunt
I shall of shoes be much in want,



A knapsack too would be of use,
All which I hope you'll not refuse.
To Growler, who sits now so warm,
To lend his gloves can do no harm.
His wife is not much wont to roam ;
She without shoes can sit at home.
Brown too could for a travelling-sack
Spare me some leather from his back,"

"Of all those things you sha'n't be stinted,"
Said she ; "We'll get them, as you hinted,
Although it were to cost the life
Of Brown, and Growler and his wife."

"Gramercy, you are very kind,"
Said he, "and with a grateful mind
I shall bring home (as 'tis your due)
Palms and indulgences to you."

Thus the false palmer made a shift
To lend his foes a deadly lift.
Growler was forc'd his gloves to lose,
And Surly her best pair of shoes ;
They were oblig'd to lend their paws,
To have them stript of skin and claws.
Poor Brown did no ways better fare,
Whose back was of its fur laid bare,
The wily traitor to provide
With a tight knapsack from his hide.
You never saw more wretched creatures.

Rankey, with pity-mocking features,
Did Surly in her dumps approach.
"I hope, you'll think it no reproach,"



REYNARD THE FOX

Quoth he, "that I your shoes shall wear,
A pledge to me extremely dear,
Although, forgetting old affection,
You lately caus'd me much affliction.
'Tis true, I had some little share
In thus arranging the affair;
(For who, when fortune him enables,
Would not turn on his foes the tables?)
But as I'm going now to Rome,
Be sure that on my coming home
You shall be welcome to a share
Of all the pardons I can spare."

Surly was lying in great pain,
And was scarce able to complain.
At last with a deep sigh she said:
"Oh, Reynard! One day you'll be paid
For having now your wicked will."

Growler and Brown did both lie still,
And chew'd the cud in dumb despair,
When Reynard with a jeering air
Rail'd at them, as he went along,
And let them feel his cutting tongue.
If Gib had not in time sheer'd off,
He likewise would have felt his scoff.

Next morning at first dawn of day
Reynard came forth in full array;
He greas'd his shoes, and put them on
And to the King he went anon.

“ My Liege,” he said, “ Your servant now
Is going to fulfil his vow ;
But ere my journey I begin,
Pray, let your Chaplain be call’d in,
That I, before I take my leave,
His benison may first receive.”

The Ram, a Clerk of mighty merit,
Well vers’d in matters of the spirit,
Was Chaplain ; Simple was his name ;
The King sent for him, and he came.
“ Here’s Reynard,” said the King ; “ come, read
Some prayers for him with due speed ;
With staff and knapsack, and the rest
Of Palmer’s garb him straight invest ;
For on a journey he’s to go.”

“ My Liege,” quoth Simple, “ don’t you know
That Reynard hath been interdicted ?
Hard punishment would be inflicted
On me, if Bishop Surface knew
That such a thing I dared to do.
But if th’ affair you so could manage,
That I might come off without damage
From him and Ruddyface, our Dean — ”

“ Pray,” said the King, “ what do you mean ?
D’ye think I care a whit for you,
Or for your Bishop and his crew ?
Read, or read not, as you think fit ;
I do not care a straw for it.

You hear, to Rome he goes away ;
If you will hinder him, you may."

Poor Simple with submissive look
Pull'd out in haste his prayer-book,
And over Rankey read a lesson,
Which he thought neither more nor less on,
Than if 't had been some tale, or song,
(As we, perhaps, may see ere long).

When he receiv'd his benison,
And had his pilgrim's dress put on,
Reynard, with palmer-staff in hand,
Feign'd to go to the holy land ;
Though he had no more mind for it
Than for a jaunt to Quarrelpit.
The cunning hypocrite did now
His tears profusely cause to flow,
As if his heart with pain was rent ;
And though his mind was only bent
On hurting all those who were there,
Just as he used the Wolf and Bear,
He did entreat them much to pray
To heav'n for blessing on his way
And for his safe return. This done,
He was in great haste to be gone ;
For still his heart was in a flurry.

"Reynard," said Noble, "I am sorry
To see you go in such a haste."
"No, Sire, I have no time to waste,"



Said he; "a pious resolution
Should straight be put in execution,
And with your leave I shall depart."

"I grant it you with all my heart,"
Quoth Noble; and his Courtiers all
He call'd together, great and small,
And earnestly did recommend them
Part of his journey to attend him.

Reynard, ere his last leave he took,
Said to the King: "My Liege, pray look
To those two felons, whom you order'd
To prison; lest by them y'are murder'd.
They are two dang'rous rogues, who would
Contrive your ruin, if they could."

Thus he departed from the Court,
Attended by a great escort
Of those who curs'd him in their heart.
He was right glad, that through his art
He led the King, as well as those
Who were his haters, by the nose.

When he was gone a little way,
With feign'd reluctance and dismay
He from th' escorting train took leave.
For Pussey he seem'd much to grieve;
'Are we indeed," said he, "to part,
Dear Puss? It wounds my very heart,
To part with Simple and with thee,
Who never gave offence to me.



Come further on with me awhile ;
Your manners are so void of guile,
You are so modest in your ways,
That all folks speak of you with praise.
Like me (when once a monk I was)
You live on greens, and herbs and grass,
And never care for fish or meat,
Or other victuals, nice to eat."

With this gross flatt'ry he at once
Prevail'd on both the simpletons,
To travel with him to his house,
And on they jogg'd to Malpertouse.
When they came to the castle-gate,
Reynard said: " Pray, friend Simple, wait;
I for some minutes will step in
With Puss, who is one of our Kin.
Commend to her, if you'll be kind,
To bid my wife to ease her mind ;
For she is apt to take a fright,
As at this juncture well she might,
When I shall let her understand
That I go to the holy land."

Thus by fair words the cunning thief
Gain'd with the silly ram belief ;
With Puss he went into his burrow,
And found his wife oppress'd with sorrow.
She never thought he would escape ;
But seeing him in pilgrim's shape,



She, what with wonder and surprise,
Could hardly trust to her own eyes.
“For heav’n’s sake,” cried she, “Reynard, tell
What strange adventures thee befell.”

“I have been sent to jail,” said he;
“But soon the King did set me free.
Growler and Brown for me gave bail,
On which I was let out of jail,
And sent on a long pilgrimage.
The King, our hardship to assuage,
Kindly presents us with this hare,
Whom he desires us not to spare;
For this malicious, sneaking thing
Has much belied me, says the King.”

Poor Pussey, struck with sad dismay
On hearing this, would run away;
But Reynard seiz’d her by her thigh.
Puss call’d out with a piteous cry:
“Help, friend, the pilgrim and his wife
Take barb’rously away my life!”
But Reynard quell’d her voice and breath,
And in a trice bit her to death.

So he regal’d his silly guest.
“Come,” said he, “and fall to in haste;
The hare is fat, and nice to eat,
And will yield a delicious treat.
She’ll now no more complain of me.”
His wife and babes fell to with glee,



And Erminet did oft exclaim :
" God bless the King and his fair Dame !
A happy night to them I wish
For sending us so nice a dish."

When all of them had satisfied
Their appetite, the she-fox cried :
" Tell us now, how you got away."

Quoth he : " I could not in a day
Tell all the tricks that I have been
A-playing to the King and Queen.
Our friendship is but thinly spun,
And thinner 'twill become anon,
When soon or late the truth comes out.
The King will make a furious rout,
And at my heels he soon will be.
I'm sure he will not pardon me ;
But for a treach'rous, lying wight,
He'll hang me, if he can, outright.
To Switzerland, I think, I shall
Retire, where I'm not known at all ;
Lord bless me, what a fruitful soil !
There's milk and honey, wine and oil ;
Fine wild-fowl, game of every kind
And fish of all sorts we shall find.
Some of them they call *Pullus*, *Gallus*,
Coturnix, *Anser*, *Perdix*, *Rallus*.
At such I always lik'd to snatch,
Because dry-shod you may them catch ;

They were my food, e'en during fast,
 When in the Convent I liv'd last.
 To that good country we'll resort,
 To live in peace, and t' have good sport.

Besides, to tell thee everything,
 I have been pardon'd by the King,
 Because I did make him believe
 That he a treasure should receive,
 Hid at a place, call'd Quarrelpit;
 But little will he see of it.
 His wrath and fury will be great
 When he perceives the barefac'd cheat;
 But I was fain to tell a lie,
 To escape the hangman's tie.
 Thanks to my wit, I got away;
 But I would not another day
 Try his good grace again to gain,
 Which I might not so cheap obtain."

Quoth Erminet: "'Tis hard to go
 To foreign parts, which we don't know;
 For while we can supply at home
 Our wants, we have no need to roam.
*A Chick in hand is worth much more,
 Than of Cranes flying half a
 score.*

—ERMINET—

Of danger there is no great fear,
 Whilst in our Castle we live here.
 It is well fortified and strong,
 And if besieg'd, 'twill hold out
 long;



REYNARD THE FOX

And we have many a secret way,
In case of need to get away.
Therefore I'm sorry for your vow
To go on pilgrimage just now."

"Why now," said Reynard, "my good wife,
I'll rather swear than lose my life;
But if in bonds I made that vow,
Since I am free, I'll break it now;
For learned Casuists will tell you,
That a forc'd oath doth not compel you.
No bus'ness at the holy grave,
Nor with the Pope of Rome, I have.
Then ease your mind, for I will stay,
And stand the brunt here, as you say.

For may be, I should meet as bad
And worse, were I to go abroad.
To hurt me here, I think, the King
Will not find it an easy thing;
If he hath pow'r, I don't want wit:
We'll see who gets the worst of it."

Meantime the Ram was tir'd, to wait
And kick his heels at Reynard's gate.
He call'd out: "Puss, where do you stay?
Come out, and let us go away."

Reynard stept forth, and told him:

"Friend,

Puss doth herself to you commend,
And as with us she's making merry,
A little she would wish to tarry,



And if you slowly will walk on,
She says, she'll follow you anon."

"Hum!" said the Ram; "but pray, what noise
Was heard just now? 'Twas like the voice
Of Puss, who cried most piteously,
And for assistance call'd to me."

"No," said the rogue, "'twas no such thing.
My Consort fell a-whimpering
When of my journey she did hear.
Puss was much for her life in fear,
And call'd out: "Help, our pilgrim's wife
Is like, for grief, to lose her life."

"Be this," quoth Simple, "as it may;
She seem'd to call in great dismay."

"No," replied Rankey, "never fear;
For Puss to me is very dear,
And rather than to give her pain,
To serve her, every nerve I'd strain.
But I must not forget to say,
Before to Court you go away,
That when we parted last, the King
Bade me to write about something.
Whilst Puss was, in her sprightly way,
With Erminet all blithe and gay,
And both together lik'd to chatter
On this and that, and th' other matter,
To write those letters I had leisure;
If you'll take them, 'twill give me pleasure."

"Why, yes," said Simple, "very well;
But where to put them, please to tell,
For I have neither pouch nor sack."

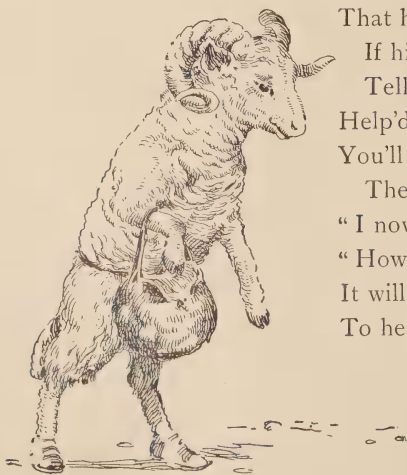
Quoth he: "The knapsack from Brown's
back

Will serve the purpose well enough,
For it is very tight and tough.
I'll go and put the letters in,
And straight come back to you again."

Instead of that, he went and made
A parcel up of Pussey's head,
And coming back, he for a sham
Thus caution'd the poor silly Ram:
"Pray, take this knapsack on your neck,
And lest the letter-seals should break,
Refrain from handling the contents.
I've tied it fast at all events,
And if the King finds that the knot
Is as I tied it, well I wot
That he will pay you for your pain.

If his applause you wish to gain,
Tell him, that you, whilst I did write,
Help'd me the letters to indite.
You'll surely meet with due reward."

The Ram for joy leapt up a yard.
"I now perceive indeed," said he,
"How much you love and favour me.
It will be a delightful sport
To hear all Gentlemen at Court



Commend me for my style in writing
And subtlety of my inditing ;
For though the praise to *You* is due,
They know it not. Great thanks to you !
'Tis well I came with you this way.
Doth Pussey now come with me, pray ? ”

“ No, she'll stay yet awhile with me,
Ere I can part with her,” quoth he ;
“ But if you slowly will walk on,
She'll overtake you, when we've done.”

The Ram took leave, and did not tarry,
The message to the King to carry.
'Twas noon-day when he came to Court.
The King, who saw him in such port,
And that with Reynard's bag he came,
Ask'd him what of the Fox became.

Quoth he : “ An't please your Majesty,
Reynard besought me earnestly
Some letters straight to you to carry,
And in this bag they are ; but marry !
When Reynard did the letters write,
Great part I help'd him to indite ;
I therefore hope you'll find the writ
Not destitute of sense and wit.”

The Beaver was first notary
And head-clerk to his Majesty,
In foreign tongues he was well versed,
And writs and letters he rehearsed

In Council. Castor was his name,
 And he was sent for. When he came,
 He was commanded by the King
 To see what news the Ram did bring.
 He op'd the bag, but in a fright
 He call'd out: "What a shocking sight!
 Would any one such thing believe?
 'Tis Pussey's head, sure as I live."

This sadly shock'd the King and Queen.
 The King exclaim'd with rage and spleen:
 "Had I this rascal here again,
 I'd make him suffer endless pain.
 How that base villain cheated me!"
 His wrath rose to such high degree,
 That he made all the woods resound,
 And frighten'd every soul around.

The Leopard, who sat next by him,
 Said: "Why, Sir, should you look so grim,
 And vex yourself about such thing?
 Such grief doth not become a King,
 Who ne'er is judg'd to do amiss."

"Are you," quoth Noble, "sure of this?
 Is't wonderful to see me grieve,
 That I this villain could believe,
 Who made me my best friends bear down,
 Stout Growler and his cousin Brown?
 'Twill stab my honour to the quick,
 That he induc'd me, by his trick,



My two first Barons to offend,
Which 'twill be difficult to mend.
This all is owing to my wife,
Who begg'd me much to spare his life,
Till I was forc'd to lend an ear;
Which I'm left to repent, I fear."

Quoth he: "Sir, if you have offended,
I'm sure, the matter may be mended.
That your two injur'd Barons must
Have some atonement, is but just.
The Ram hath own'd without disguise,
That he did Pussey's death advise,
By which he forfeited his life.
Give him to Growler and his wife,
And to their wounded cousin Brown,
And they'll be thankful for the boon.
Then we'll of Reynard go in quest;
I hope to catch him in his nest.
To try him is not worth a straw;
We'll hang him straight by martial law,
For if he's suffer'd to harangue,
We ne'er shall live to see him hang."

The King approving this advice,
There was no need to give it twice.
"Go," he replied, "without delay,
And fetch th' imprison'd Barons, pray.
Tell them: We from our royal Grace
Restore to them their rank and place;

Henceforth the same respect to Brown
And Growler shall again be shown,
Which hath in former time been paid them,
Before the wicked fox betray'd them.
You'll let them know how he contriv'd,
That Pussey was of life depriv'd,
And that, abetted by the Ram,
Her head he sent us for a sham.
To make the Ram pay for his sin,
They shall have him and all his Kin."

The Leopard to the pris'ners went,
To whom his mind he thus unbent:
"Good news I bring to you," quoth he.
"The King sets you at liberty,
And very sorry, Sirs, he is,
If anything was done amiss.
Therefore he order'd me to proffer
The Ram to you, by way of offer.
Him and his Kin and friends you may
At any time destroy and slay.
He further grants you his permission
To waylay without intermission
Rankey the Fox, your enemy,
His wife and all his family.
You may detain, imprison, kill
And slay them, when and where you will.
These grants he will bestow on you
And on all your descendants too,



Provided you forget the past,
And will be loyal to the last."

This offer being by the Bear
And Wolf thought honourable and fair,
Poor Simple did with all his Kin
Pay for the bargain with their skin.

No treaty after long contention
Was ever kept with more attention ;
For Wolves and Bears devour and slay
Poor harmless sheep until this day.





Part III Canto I

The Outlawry

Argument

The King prolongs the feasts at Court,
To which all beasts and birds resort.
The Rabbit and the Crow complain
Of Reynard's treachery again ;
Of which his friend, the badger Gray,
Gives him a hint that very day.
Him Reynard gaily doth invite
To sup with him, and spend the night.

The King, desirous to confer
More honour on the Wolf and Bear,
For twelve days more prolong'd the feasts,
To the great joy of birds and beasts ;
But greater joy did Reynard's fall
And new disgrace give to them all,
And they resolv'd, of him again
In a joint body to complain.

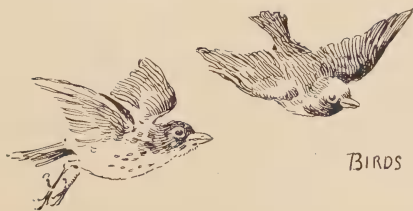
New messengers to every end
Of his great realm the King did send.

Beasts of all Kind, Birds of all feather
 Came flocking from all parts together;
 But in the meantime, night and day,
 Reynard in waiting for them lay,
 And not a few he made repent,
 That on such pastime they were bent.

Great was the merriment and sport
 With balls and tournaments at Court;
 Trumpets did sound, and bells were rung;
 Some danc'd, some fought, some drank and
 sung,

While King and Queen did look about
 With pleasure on the merry rout.

But when the eighth day scarce was past,
 And Noble sat at his repast,
 The Rabbit came with mournful mien,
 And thus address'd the King and Queen:
 "With pain and sorrow I appear,
 My Liege and Queen, before You here.
 You never saw such treachery
 As Reynard practis'd against me.
 At dawn of morning yesterday,
 As I came travelling this way,
 I saw him sitting at his door.
 A pilgrim's dress and hood he wore.
 I thought he read his morning pray'r,
 And without caution I drew near.

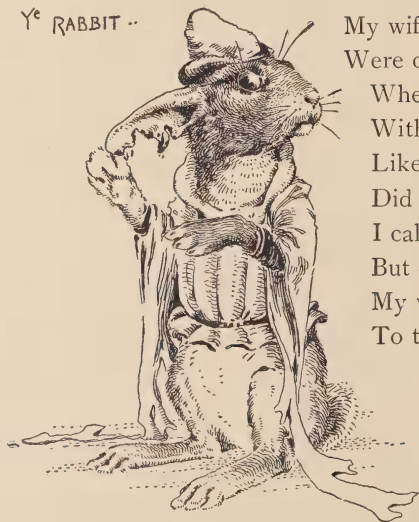


BIRDS OF ALL FEATHER...

He got up from his seat to meet me ;
 I thought he friendly meant to greet me ;
 But of a sudden with his claw
 He gave me such a horrid paw,
 That, what with fright, what with the wound,
 It brought me nearly to the ground.
 Thanks to my legs, I got away,
 Or I should not have liv'd this day ;
 But still I lost part of my ear,
 And was almost half dead with fear.
 Whoever ventures o'er the plain,
 Risks, by him basely to be slain."

Whilst thus the Rabbit told his story,
 The Crow came in, cast down and sorry.
 "My Liege," quoth he, "I scarce can speak,
 And my poor heart is like to break.
 The loss, which I have undergone,
 Would be enough to move a stone.
 My wife and I this morning early
 Were coming through a field of barley,
 Where Reynard in a path did lie,
 With eyes askance, and head awry,
 Like a dead dog ; his tongue uncouth
 Did hang out of his gaping mouth.
 I call'd for help in great dismay,
 But dead like any stone he lay.
 My wife his bosom strok'd, and chin,
 To try if life was still within.

Y^e RABBIT ..





But while she thought he was quite dead,
He seiz'd her, and bit off her head.
At me the traitor likewise snapp'd,
And I but narrowly escap'd;
Then, perching on a neighb'ring tree,
I with my eyes was doom'd to see
How my poor wife he did devour;
Nay, if there had been half a score,
He'd have devour'd them all together.
He scarcely left of her this feather,
Which, when the murderer was gone,
I came to gather up anon.
My Liege, it is of highest need
To punish this atrocious deed;
For those who would the guilty spare
Are justly deem'd the guilt to share."

The King, who heard these new complaints
And weigh'd the plaintiff's arguments,
Was vex'd with anger and with grief,
And breathing wrath against the thief,
He said: "Well, by the faith We owe
T' our loving Consort, we do vow,
This breach of peace shall cost him dear.
I have done wrong to lend an ear
To his lies, and to let him loose.
The villain us'd me like a goose,
When I a palmer made of him,
And sent him to Jerusalem.
But I may thank my wife for it;
For all is owing to her wit;

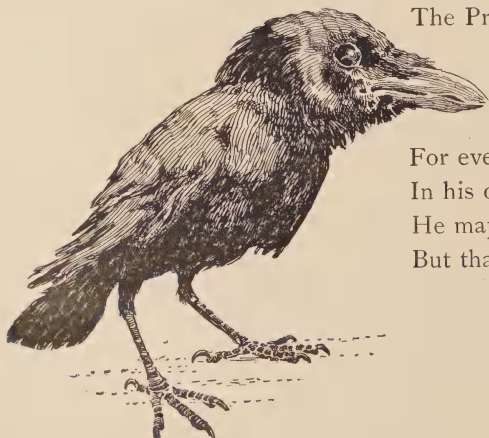
Though I am not the only fool,
 Who hath been made a woman's tool.
 This Rankey is a lying thief,
 Who thinks of nothing but mischief.
 It is high time to mar his plots,
 Lest all the world think we are sots.
 Then let us find out means to get him,
 And when we have him, we will sweat him."

Growler, as well as Brown the Bear,
 Were glad to hear King Noble swear;
 They wish'd much to stir up his rage,
 And yet to speak they durst not wage,
 Because so furious was his look,
 Their noise he might not calmly brook.

At last the Queen put in a word.
 "Don't be so wroth," she said, "My Lord,
 And don't so lightly vow and swear,
 If you will of reproach beware.

We cannot fairly weigh the case,
 Before we hear what Reynard says.
 The Proverb, *Alteram partem audi*,
 Is a good rule for anybody,
 And may be, if the fox was here,
 A diff'rent story we might hear;
 For every one (we all know well)
 In his own way his tale will tell.
 He may be bad for aught I know,
 But that he's clever, you'll allow.

YE CROW...





The number of his friends is great,
And they are useful to the State.
I thought his tale was void of art,
And on that ground I took his part:
If I'm mistaken, time will show it;
If you will hang him, you may do it;
But don't condemn him hastily,
Lest you repent it leisurely."

"Sir," said the Leopard, "it is true,
To wait can draw no blame on you.
The Queen's opinion I think wise,
And if these Lords the same advise,
Let Reynard be allow'd to speak,
Before your wrath on him you wreak."

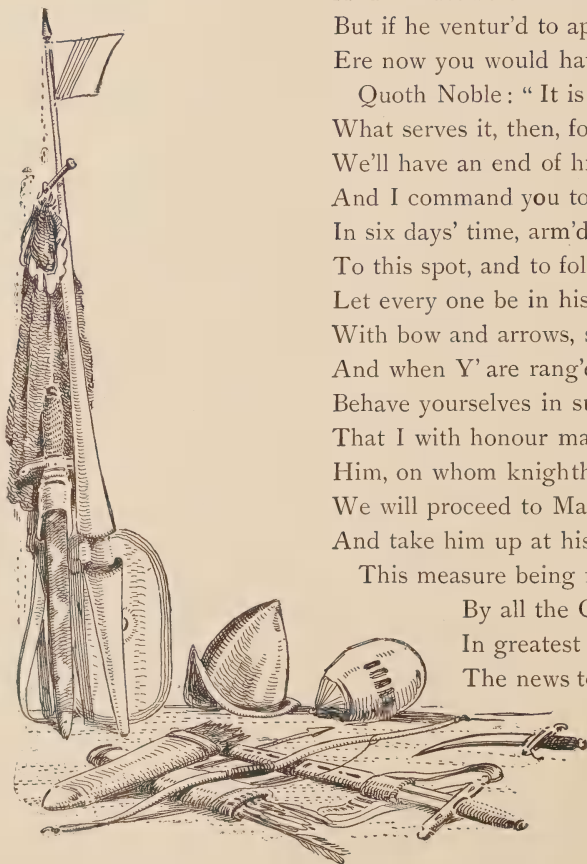
Quoth Growler: "'Twill not be amiss
To take a fool's advice on this.
Sir Leopard, if the fox was here,
And would attempt himself to clear
Of all the matter, which the Crow
And Rabbit have advanc'd just now,
I have in store some other thing
Which to the gallows him must bring;
But I'll be silent now, and let him,
Until before the bar we get him.
Was 't not enough, the wily thief
Durst impose on the King's belief,
And tell him in his lying fit
Of treasures hid at Quarrelpit?

And have not Brown and I been shent,
 And for his lies to prison sent?
 I'll lay my life, he would be flay'd,
 Ere but one word of truth he said;
 For since his birth his whole intent
 On mischief and deceit is bent.
 My Lords, you'll do what you think fit,
 And I must be content with it;
 But if he ventur'd to appear,
 Ere now you would have seen him here."

Quoth Noble: "It is as you say;
 What serves it, then, for him to stay?
 We'll have an end of his affair,
 And I command you to repair
 In six days' time, arm'd *Cap-a-pie*,
 To this spot, and to follow me.
 Let every one be in his gear
 With bow and arrows, sword and spear,
 And when Y'are rang'd, each to his banner,
 Behave yourselves in such a manner,
 That I with honour may call *Sir*
 Him, on whom knighthood I confer.
 We will proceed to Malpertouse,
 And take him up at his own house."

This measure being fix'd upon

By all the Council, Gray anon
 In greatest hurry did depart,
 The news to Reynard to impart.



Whilst pensive o'er the plain he walk'd,
Thus to himself in dumps he talk'd :
" Poor Reynard ! Now it is indeed
A question, how at last you'll speed.
Of all your clan you are the head,
For whom we now are left to dread ;
Else, when for us you us'd to plead,
In all concerns we did succeed."

With this and such like lamentation,
Gray finish'd his peregrination.
When he arriv'd at Malpertouse,
Reynard met him before his house.
Two fine young pigeons, which to leave
Their nest had ventur'd in the eve,
And meant their little wings to try,
H' had caught, because they could not fly.
When he saw Gray, he came to meet him,
And friendly did receive and greet him.
" Be welcome here, my friend," said he ;
" You always mean it well with me.
You seem to be in wondrous flurry ;
What news d' ye bring in such a hurry ?"

" News I have got indeed," quoth Gray ;
" But not the best, I'm griev'd to say.
I am much for your life afraid,
For e'en the King himself hath said
That you a shameful death shall die,
And orders he did notify

To his troops, to attend him here
In six days' time, with sword and spear.
This wears a very dang'rous face ;
For Brown stands high in his good grace,
And Growler is in favour too
With him, as much as I'm with you,
And it is said that out of hand
He'll get a general command.
In short, I fear some ill design
Is form'd, which you must countermine.
The number of your friends is small,
While crowds of foes contrive your fall.
Of late the Crow and Rabbit too
Have grievously complain'd of you.
If you are caught, your life will be
(I fear) in greatest jeopardy."

" And is this all ? " ask'd Reynard, " Pshaw !
I do not value it a straw.
The King and all his Court may swear
Whate'er they please ; I do not care.
If I advise myself, you'll see,
United they won't injure me.
Come, take a bit of supper, pray,
And let us send all cares away.
Two fat young pigeons I just now
Have caught ; they are nice food, I trow,
And you may eat them, bones and all,
For suppers should be light and small.



My wife will strive to treat us well ;
But pray, be cautious not to tell
The matter, which has brought you here ;
For smallest things put her in fear.
To-morrow we will go to Court,
Where I depend on your support."

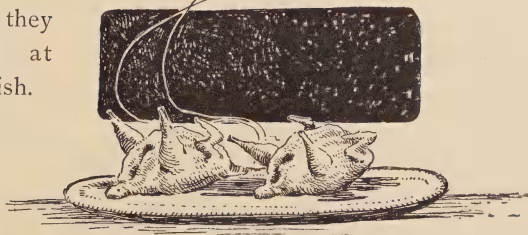
"I shall," quoth Gray, "be staunch and true,
And lay down goods and life for you."

"'Tis comfort," Rankey said, "you give ;
I'll thank you for it, if I live."

"For your advice, friend, I can say
That you may safely come," said Gray.
"The Leopard mov'd to-day the Court,
(The Queen his motion did support),
That full permission should be granted
To you to speak all that you wanted,
And that, until you had been heard,
Your life by all means should be spar'd."

Quoth Reynard : "To obtain this grant,
Will be as much as I shall want ;
For if I get but leave to chatter,
I soon shall twist about the matter."

This said, they stept into the hall,
Where Gray was well receiv'd by all ;
And Erminet serv'd up the
dish,
On which they
feasted at
their wish.



Whilst they were sitting at their mess,
Reynard said: "Pray my friend, confess,
What think you of our little crew;
And how appear my babes to you?
They are two little cunning elves,
Who begin to exert themselves.
They'll catch a gosling, or a pullet,
To fill their pretty little gullet;
The one will lurk, the other dive;
Faith, I'm in hopes they both will thrive.
But ere I send them out to hunt,
They first shall learn to stand the brunt
Of yelping hounds, and to beware
Of baited trap and hidden snare.
Already after me they take;
They know the leap, the snatch, the shake;
For oft in play I do impart
To the young mimics all my art."

Quoth Gray: "'Tis happiness indeed
And pride to see one's children speed,
And young lads should be early made
Acquainted with their parent's trade.
I'm very glad to hear you tell,
My pretty cousins promise well."

"Thank you! we'll now leave that alone,"
Quoth Reynard, "and to bed be gone;
You must be tir'd, and 'tis the best
For us to take a little rest."

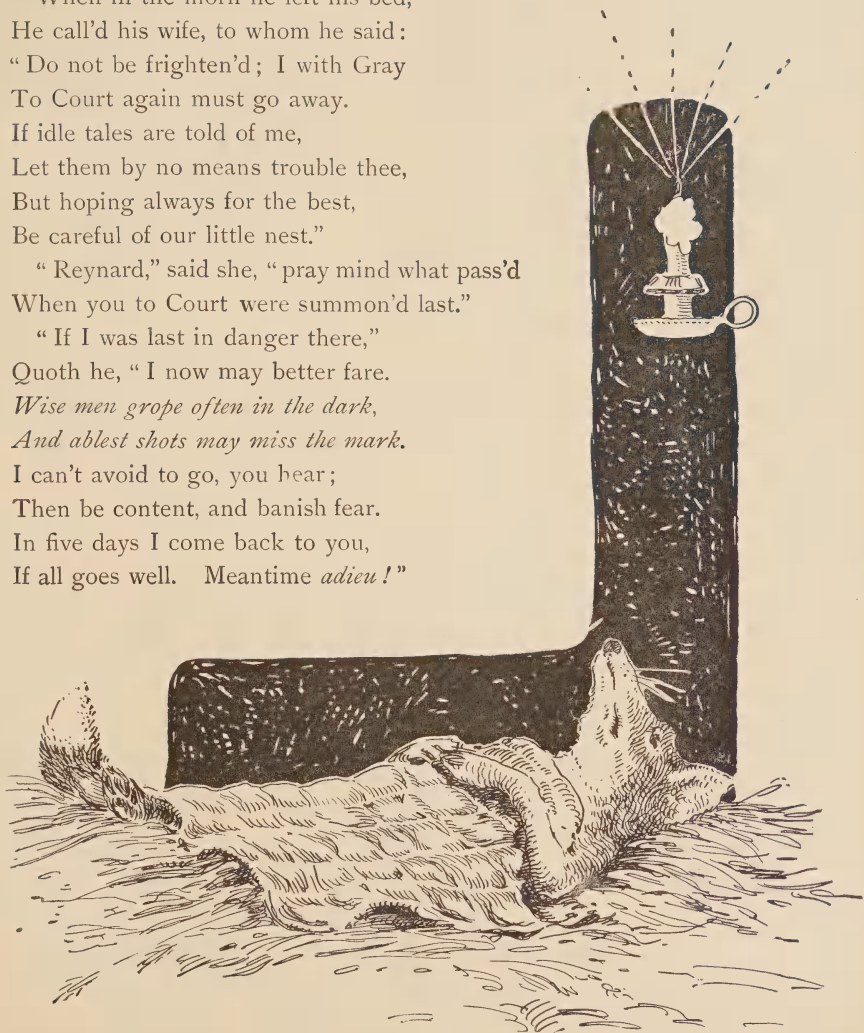
This said, the floor was strew'd with hay,
And all about the hall they lay;

Though Reynard was not free from fright,
And hardly closed an eye that night.

When in the morn he left his bed,
He call'd his wife, to whom he said:
"Do not be frighten'd; I with Gray
To Court again must go away.
If idle tales are told of me,
Let them by no means trouble thee,
But hoping always for the best,
Be careful of our little nest."

"Reynard," said she, "pray mind what pass'd
When you to Court were summon'd last."

"If I was last in danger there,"
Quoth he, "I now may better fare.
*Wise men grope often in the dark,
And ablest shots may miss the mark.*
I can't avoid to go, you hear;
Then be content, and banish fear.
In five days I come back to you,
If all goes well. Meantime *adieu!*"





Canto II

The Journey

Argument

Reynard sets out, and by the way
Once more he doth confess to Gray.
To palliate his guilt and shame,
He on the Clergy casts the blame.
His friend reproves his vain quotations,
Though he admits his observations.
Pug makes an offer, to proceed
To Rome, his cause for him to plead.

While Reynard walk'd along with Gray
He told his nephew by the way :
" 'Tis difficult to guess (you know)
What fate at Court awaits me now.
At any rate I think it best
Once more by you to be confess'd :
Therefore my sins, both great and small,
I am resolv'd to tell you all.

It was a great and heinous sin,
That I made Brown part with his skin.

Growler and Surly too did lose
Their claws, to get me gloves and shoes;
For rancour against them, and spite,
Made me the King's ill-will excite.

I much abus'd his royal ear,
By telling him of jewels dear,
Of treasures, hid at Quarrelpit,
And Goldsmith's work; which was not fit.

Poor Puss I kill'd with fell intent,
And to the King her head I sent;
Which cost the harmless Ram his life.

The Crow complains, I kill'd his wife;
The Rabbit says I cropt his ear;
All which is but too true, I fear.

One thing, besides, I last forgot,
With which my conscience I did blot;
A trick, which to the Wolf I play'd,
Which I don't wish to get repaid:
Once, while we saunter'd o'er a plain,
Growler of hunger did complain;
A fine foal-mare we there espied,
Whose Colt was skipping by her side.
Growler sent me, to ask the Mare,
If she to us her Colt would spare,
And how dear it was to be sold.
I went, and by the Mare was told,
That if I wish'd to know the price,
She'd let me read it in a trice.

Her words were follow'd by a motion,
Which made me tell her: 'I've no notion
Of letters, and I am not bent
On Colt's-flesh; but I have been sent
By Growler, who is with me here.'
'Then,' said she, 'tell him to draw near.'

I went, and told him: 'If you'll eat
A copious mess of nice Colt's-meat,
The Mare will sell her Foal to you.
The price is mark'd below her shoe.
She would have show'd it me, indeed,
But I was never taught to read.
You had best go, and try to spell it.'

'It were strange, if I could not tell it,'
Said he, 'who am so deeply read
In languages, both quick and dead,
In which I often have disputed,
And many learned Clerks confuted.
Nay, writings, which to few are known,
I read as glibly as my own.
If you'll but wait a little bit,
I'll go, and read this curious writ.'

He ran, and ask'd the Mare, how dear
She'd sell her Colt. She said: 'Look here,
The price is noted on my shoe.'

'Let's see,' quoth he. She said: 'Pray do.'
This said, she lifted up her heel,
And with a kick she made him reel;



For she had got an iron shoe
With six sharp nails, put on quite new,
Which she imprinted on his head,
And near an hour he lay for dead.

Whilst both the Mare and Colt ran off,
I came and ask'd him, for a scoff :
' Pray Sir, how did you like the Foal ?
Have you alone eat up the Whole,
And not left me the smallest share
For bringing answer from the Mare ?
Pray tell, what on her Shoe was writ ;
For surely you've decipher'd it.
Have you been napping after dinner ? '

' Don't banter a poor, hapless sinner,'
Quoth he ; ' that longshank'd Jade just now
(Confound her !) hit me such a blow,
As laid me senseless on the Clod.
She was with iron newly shod,
And 'twas no writing, which I read,
But nails of steel, which broke my head.'
He scarce got cur'd in three weeks' time.

Thus, friend, I have own'd every crime,
Which I can call to recollection.
I'm ready to receive correction
And clear my conscience, that I may
With easy mind appear to-day,
And with your good advice, I fain
Will seek the way to grace again."



“Your sins are great indeed,” quoth Gray ;
“But since the Dead are gone away,
And many things with cares involve you,
Of past offences I’ll absolve you.
If you have anything to dread,
It is for sending Pussey’s head ;
Indeed, it was a daring thing,
That you durst send it to the King.”

“Why now,” quoth Reynard, “for my part
I do not take this much to heart.
Who through this World must fight his way,
Can’t mind his conscience every day.
I saw the hare was fat and good,
And fit to yield the nicest food.
The Ram’s blood out of spleen I spilt.
Theirs was the damage ; mine the guilt.
I just from Court came in a pet ;
What wonder then, that I did fret ?
Though, to confess the truth to Ye,
It savour’d not of charity.

But very properly You say :
Those who are dead are gone away ;
Then let us drop this odious matter,
And on some other subject chatter :
Our present times abound with vices,
Witness our Clergymen’s devices,
Who, whilst for models they should serve,
Too often from their duty swerve.

Nay, even our liege Lord, the King,
Doth not refrain from pilfering,
And though not openly himself
He comes, to take away our pelf,
Yet Wolves and Bears with loaves and fishes
Know mighty well to meet his wishes.
But still he thinks, this all is fair;
For none to him the truth declare.
Confessors, Chaplains and their crew
Make him believe, 'tis all his due,
And basely they neglect their duty,
Because they all share in the booty,
Though 'twere but for a hood, or gown.
Poor Commoners are thus kept down,
Unheard, unjudg'd, they must refrain,
Of their oppressors to complain.
For since the Lion hath the sway,
And Bears and Wolves have won the day,
'Tis honour thought by them to steal
And prey upon the Common-weal.
But if poor Reynard lifts a Goose,
The hounds of Justice are let loose,
And 'Hang the thief,' and 'Crucify,'
Becomes the universal cry.

*For small thieves are hang'd out of hand,
Whilst wholesale robbers rule the land.*

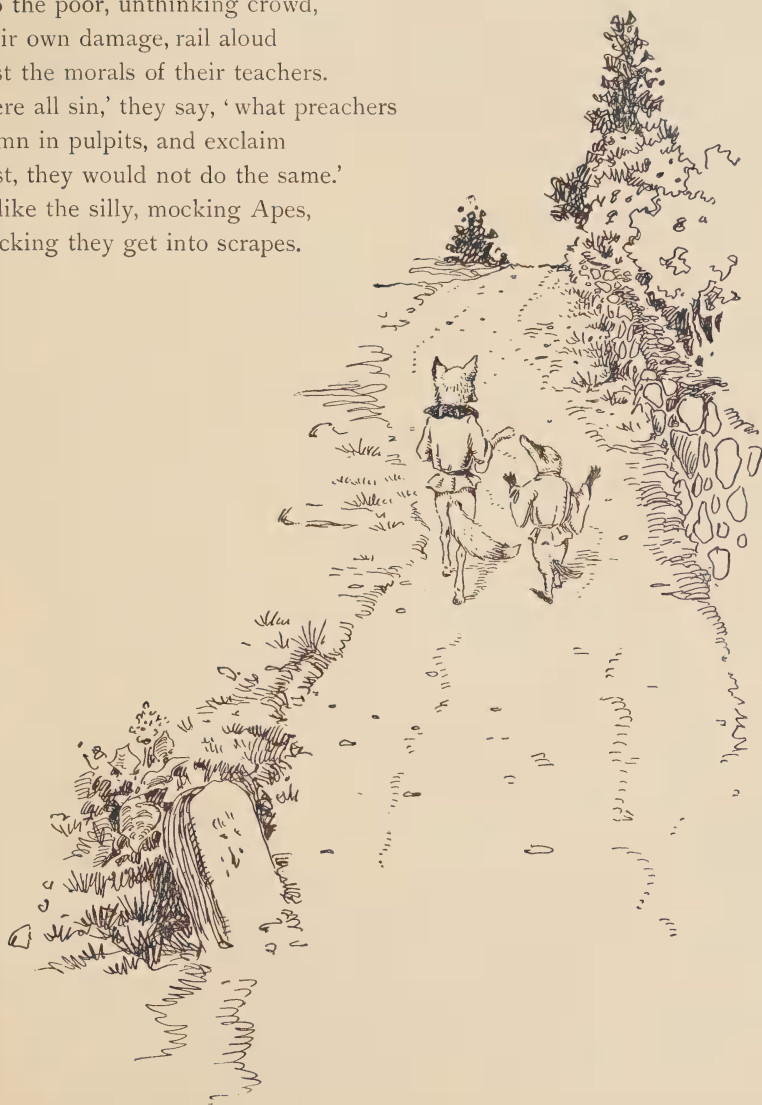
Such bad examples have seduc'd me,
And to foul play they have induc'd me,



Because I thought, what others did
Was not to me alone forbid;
And though my conscience would, at times,
Awake, and tell me of my crimes,
Yet, when I saw that Churchmen did
Not always live as they were bid,
Confirm'd in guilt, no more afraid,
I carried on my wonted trade;
For e'en great Prelates now-a-day
Don't always walk the narrow way.

But diff'rence must be always made
'Twixt men and men of every trade;
And so 'tis with the Clergy too.
That some are bad is but too true,
But others, by their conduct, teach
The same good maxims, which they preach.
But is it not a cruel thing,
That there's no end of censuring?
What's good we don't inquire about;
But what is bad, we soon find out,
And our delight is to descry
The splinter in our neighbour's eye.
Of this we like to say and sing,
But not to praise a handsome thing.
Is 't wondrous then, that on our scurvy
Ant's hill, all things go topsy-turvy?
Bad habits (th' adage says) are catching,
And are caught, like the Itch, by scratching.

Just so the poor, unthinking crowd,
To their own damage, rail aloud
Against the morals of their teachers.
'If 'twere all sin,' they say, 'what preachers
Condemn in pulpits, and exclaim
Against, they would not do the same.'
Thus, like the silly, mocking Apes,
By mocking they get into scrapes.



A clergyman of gentle mood
And conduct wise, can do much good,
Whilst others, who are bent on vices,
Mislead their flock to bad devices,
And though they preach the purest lore,
'Twill be as bad as 'twas before.
'What means their preaching,' Laymen say,
'If all their deeds their words unsay?
Before their sermon they conclude,
To Charity they oft allude,
By telling us, that money, spent
In good works, to the Lord is lent;
But they will be the last of any
To lend the Lord a single penny,
And ere a doit they give the poor,
They'll see them starving at their door.
Soft clothes, nice victuals and hard drinking,
On such they are for ever thinking.'

A pious and devout Divine
Won't deck himself with outward shine;
Righteous and meek he'll walk before,
And lead his flock to heaven's door.

Not so the lazy brotherhood,
Who wear a chaplet, frock and hood,
And go from house to house about,
The richest shriving to find out.

They'll cringe and fawn, and pray and whine,
Till somebody ask them to dine ;
Nay, if you ask one, he'll bring more.
There are besides full half a score,
Who in each Convent take the lead,
And on the nicest morsels feed.
These are preferr'd before all Friars,
As Guardians, Lecturers and Priors,
And when in hall they dine, or sup,
To them the choicest is serv'd up,
Whilst others must, both night and day,
Read matins, bury, sing and pray.

It is the same with the Pope's Legates,
With Bishops, Deans and other Prelates.
E'en simp'ring Nuns like to receive,
But would be very loth to give.
In short, not two in ten there are,
Who to fulfil their vows will care."



Quoth Gray : " My friend, you do not well,
Your neighbour's faults to me to tell ;
For 'tis not worth to you a pin
To speak of aught but your own sin.
What bus'ness have we here, to ask
How monks and nuns perform their task ?
Let them for all such matters answer
To their Superiors, as they can, Sir.
Meantime I freely will confess
That many things you shrewdly guess ;
And all your observations show
How well the ways of men you know.
It might not be at all amiss,
If we to you were to confess ;
For many Clerks, as well as I,
Might for advice to you apply."

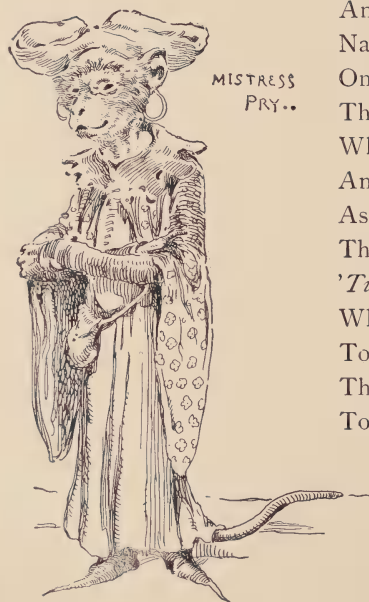
When of the Court they now got sight,
Reynard was seiz'd with sudden fright.
But Pug the monkey met him there,
And in great part reliev'd his care.



Something of Reynard's case he knew;
To help him further to the clue,
Reynard said: " Fortune hath of late
Show'd me the bald part of her pate.
Some rogues, whoever they may be,
Have grievously complain'd of me:
The Crow hath lost his wife, I hear;
The Rabbit says I cropt his ear.
But if I could approach the King,
It should not avail them anything.
I am however much afflicted,
That by the Pope I'm interdicted;
For on that score, I know the Dean
Traduc'd me before the King and Queen.
All this for Growler's sake I suffer;
For I help'd that ungrateful huffer
When to his heels the vagrant took,
And wantonly his cell forsook.
'Twas I who set the ruffian free,
When tir'd of fasts and chastity;
And now, for payment of my pain,
The wretch, with all his might and main,
Decries me, and tries everything,
To make me odious to the King.
If I'm oblig'd to go to Rome,
I much fear for my wife at home,
To whom he will, with all his clan,
Do as much mischief as he can.

But if, from th' interdict releas'd
My mind and conscience were appeas'd,
In better spirits I, to plead
My cause at Court, could now proceed."

Quoth Pug: "I'm going straight to Rome;
Then, if you wish to stay at home,
Intrust your bus'ness but to me,
And in the best hands it shall be.
You know, our Bishop's clerk I was,
And all things through my hands did pass:
In spite of Bishops and of Deans,
To serve you well, I have the means.
My worthy friend and uncle Simon,
Who is a pow'rful and a sly man,
Hath everything at his command,
And will help those who fill his hand.
Nay, he is not the only friend,
On whom at Rome I can depend;
There's Doctor Wrest, and bach'lor Civil,
Who'll gain a supper from the devil,
And both will follow, while we've money,
As busily, as flies do honey.
The proverb says, and all men know:
'Tis money makes the Mare to go.
Whilst of your job I shall take care,
To Court meantime you may repair.
There mistress Pry, my wife, you'll find,
To whom the King and Queen are kind,



Because she's of a gay deport,
Apply to her but for support,
And readily she'll grant it you.
Her sisters, and our children too,
And many of your own relations
Will strive to screen you from vexations.
If after all you don't succeed,
Let me but know of it with speed,
And the Pope's ban shall be inflicted,
And King and Country interdicted.

The Pope is old and sick, and cares
But little about all affairs;
But there's a jolly Cardinal,
Hight Bonnyblade, who governs all.
I know a pretty, buxom Lass,
With whom his evenings he doth pass:
To all requests, which she presents,
He always readily consents.
Sir Pinchpenny and Doctor Hoard
Sit both at the spiritual board,
And those who do not grease their paw,
Are sure to be denied the law.
These are the men who shall forgive you,
And from the interdict relieve you.

The King will shortly be aware,
That I'm befriending your affair.
He knows that I negotiate
All matters well in Church and State.

Consid'ring that, he'll not oppress you;
Therefore have courage, friend. God bless
you!"

This said, they parted on the spot,
And each his diff'rent way did trot.



..PUG...

Canto III



The Advocacy

Argument

Reynard, when question'd by the King,
Denies with boldness everything.
The King is wroth ; but mistress Pry,
The monkey's wife, of conduct sly,
Tells him, to bring his anger down,
A story of a Snake and Clown ;
On which the King, returning back,
Grants Reynard leave again to clack.

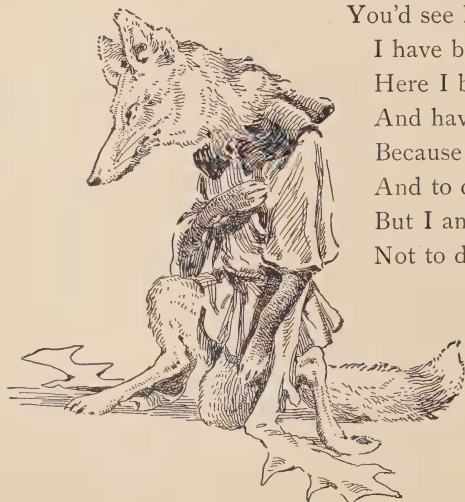
When Reynard came again to Court,
He did affect a steady port,
And through the crowd he made his way,
Attended by his nephew Gray ;
But seeing, to his great regret,
That all around he was beset
By those who wish'd to see him fall,
His courage fail'd him after all ;
When Gray, his friend, him thus admonish'd :
"Reynard," he said, "be not astonish'd.

Fortune's a woman, then be steady,
For faint heart never won fair lady."
 Reynard thank'd him, and looking round
 Once more, he to his comfort found,
 That though his foes did crowd the hall,
 The number likewise was not small
 Of those on whom he could depend,
 His cause and int'rest to befriend.

He then advanc'd, and bending knee,
 "God save the King and Queen!" quoth he,
 "And send them wisdom, to determine
 'Twixt trusty folks and lying vermin;
 For it is difficult to trace
 Low minds below a fawning face.
 I wish all hearts were made of glass,
 That one might see what there doth pass;
 You then would be convinc'd, liege Lord,
 That I speak truth in every word.
 You'd see how faithful and how true

I have been all along to you.
 Here I by many am abus'd,
 And have been slanderously accus'd,
 Because to hurt me they endeavour,
 And to deprive me of your favour.
 But I am sure, you are too wise,
 Not to discern what they devise.

My cause I'm ready to defend,
 And on your Justice I depend."





"Your fawning speeches," quoth the King,
"Shall not avail you anything.
You have put many tricks on me,
But of no use they now shall be;
For though you play your pranks with art,
You are a villain in your heart.
We daily hear complaints of you;
What with the old, what with the new
(Witness the Rabbit and the Crow),
Your rogueries too well we know."

Quoth Reynard: "Nay, upon my word,
You have been misinform'd, My Lord.
Hear me, and if you can deny
That I am guiltless, let me die.
You know that I with rede¹ and deed
Have serv'd you oft in time of need;
Nay, I have oft kept watch for you
(Of which your Highness little knew),
Whilst you were basely left by those
Who now between us interpose.
Nay, if my conscience bade me fear
Before my Judges to appear,
I might have staid in peace at home,
And should not now to Court have come.

¹ *Rede* (Sax. *ræd*) Counsel, advice. The word is obsolete; but, like many other quaint expressions, it suits the humour of the comic poem.

For when my worthy cousin Gray
Came to inform me yesterday,
That to this place I must repair,
I was just going to prepare
For going to the holy See.
But Pug, my cousin, met with me,
And told me, he himself with speed
To Rome was going to proceed,
And if I wish'd to come to Court,
My case at Rome he would report.
As soon as I was here arriv'd,
I heard, my enemies contriv'd
My reputation to attack,
And slander me behind my back;
For to the Rabbit and the Crow
Much friendship I did always show.
Instead of thanks, they now traduced me,
And falsely of great crimes accused me.
Be pleas'd to know, that some days past,
Whilst I, just after breaking fast,
Read morning pray'r before my burrow,
The Rabbit came, and said: 'Good morrow!'
I friendly ask'd, which way he went.
'To Court,' said he, 'my course is bent.'
I saw that he did pant and sweat,
And ask'd if he would take a whet.
He gladly did accept my offer,
And I as readily did proffer

New bread and fish, and fruit and curds,
 Such as a country-house affords.
 When he had eat his fill of fish,
 My youngest boy long'd for the dish
 (You know, at any time of day
 Children are fond of food and play);
 But with a blow th' ungrateful clown
 Knock'd the poor harmless infant down.
 When this my eldest son perceiv'd,
 His little brother he reliev'd,
 And pull'd the bumpkin by his beard.
 To quell their fray, I interfer'd;
 Or else the blockhead in the strife
 Deserv'dly might have lost his life.
 Now he would fain make it appear,
 That I on purpose cropt his ear.

The Crow came on another day,
 And in a seeming great dismay
 He told me he had lost his wife.
 'A fish,' he said, 'hath cost her life;
 For with the bones she swallow'd it,
 And suddenly died in a fit.'
 He must know best, how this befell her,
 The rascal says that I did kill her;
 But, may be, if the truth was known,
 These were some doings of his own.
 If I had leave the rogue to question,
 He soon should make a full confession.





What means to catch a Crow have I,
While I'm afoot and Crows can fly?

If anybody else is here,
Who by witnesses makes it appear
That I have wrong'd him, I'm his man;
Let him convict me, if he can;
Or else I'll meet him in the field
With lance and target, sword and shield;
There let it be by single fight
Determin'd, who is wrong, who right.
Such is the ancient, standing Law,
In which I will not make a flaw."

All those who in the hall stood near him,
Were very much surpris'd to hear him.
The Crow and Rabbit stood amaz'd,
And on the daring liar gaz'd.
"The devil take this treach'rous wight,"
Said they; "he calls us out to fight;
But ten of us durst not attack him,
And as to witnesses (plague rack him!)
He knows that none we can produce;
Therefore to plead is of no use,
For the arch rogue would overreach
Us all by dint of subtle speech."
Thus their lost labour they did rue,
And forthwith from the Court withdrew.

Growler and Brown were very loth
To see these plaintiffs sheer off both;



For now the King call'd out aloud :
" Pray, what's become of all the crowd,
Who against Reynard did appear?
Why don't they speak, while he is here? "

" I will explain it, Sir, to you,"
Said Reynard; " for 'tis nothing new,
Those who set up the loudest clack
Against you while you turn your back,
Will sneak off, when your face you show,
Just like the Rabbit and the Crow,
Who absent brought me into blame,
But tamely sheer'd off when I came.
'Tis not on my account, My Lord,
That I dare to put in a word
(For I'm worth little to the State):
But if such rogues were left to prate,
They'd slander many who are true,
And faithfully attach'd to you."

" May be 'tis so," said the King;
" But answer me another thing,
Vile thief and felon as you are!
What made you kill poor Puss, the Hare?
When last I granted you my pardon,
And made you put a pilgrim's garb on,
Did not you promise, out of hand
To travel to the holy land,
And coming back, to go to Rome,
Palms and indulgence to bring home? "

It was in hopes to see you mend,
That I your purpose did befriend.
How durst you then, that very day,
To take my servant's life away?
For my own Chaplain Simple, marry!
The message of her death did carry.
Her head he brought me in a bag,
And had the impudence to brag
Of letters, which, though you did write them,
He had assisted to indite them.
Thus by your daring insolence
You both have heighten'd your offence,
For which the Ram receiv'd his due;
He lost his life, and so shall you."

"Is't possible, that Puss is dead,"
Cried Reynard, lifting up his head,
'And Simple too? Then I'm forlorn,
And wish I never had been born;
For I have lost the greatest treasure,
And am left to repent at leisure,
That by him, whom I thought my friend,
The rarest jewels I did send.
'Tis clear that for the sake of gain
Poor Pussy by the Ram was slain."

The King did not pay much attention
To anything the Fox did mention;
For on revenge his mind was bent,
And to his rooms away he went.

The Queen was sitting there with Pry,
Who in her favour did stand high;
And with her parts and ready Wit
The King too was a little smit;
To whom, as soon as he came in,
She said with a submissive mien:
“Don’t be to Reynard so unkind,
My Liege. If you’ll recall to mind
What services you have receiv’d
From his late father, while he liv’d,
And that to me he’s near a-kin,
You’ll overlook some trifling sin.
You see, he doth not shun the Law,
And heretofore we often saw,
That he is better skill’d in it
Than Wolves and Bears, with all their wit.”

“Pray, is it then a trifling thing,
Which stirs my anger?” said the King.

“Did he not lately kill the Hare,
And draw the Ram into his snare?
Are not his crimes the general cry?”

“May be, not all is true,” said Pry.
“Reynard is very shrewd and smart;
Which many envy in their heart.
You must remember, I dare say,
How a poor hind complain’d one day,
That a snake did attempt his life.
Nobody then could quell their strife,



Till Reynard came, and judg'd the cause,
And met from you with great applause."

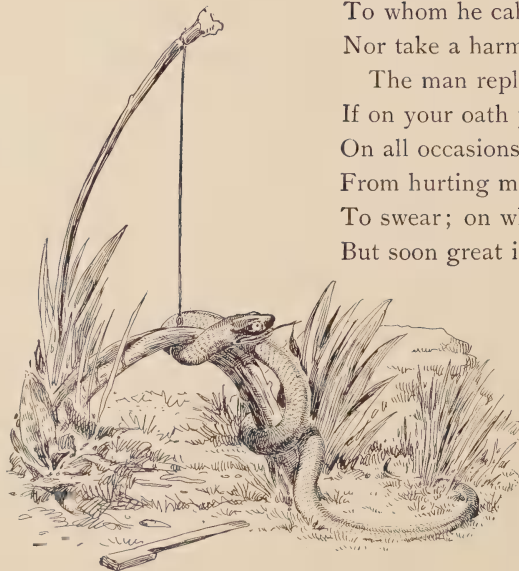
"Yes, I remember such a thing,
But not exactly," said the King.
"I wish you would the case relate,
Which, I believe, was intricate."

Quoth Pry: "'Tis now about a year,
That the said Serpent did appear,
And brought a Countryman before you.
The Snake for justice did implore you,
Because the man was obstinate,
A Jury's verdict to debate.

The Snake, in creeping through a gap,
Fell, as it seems, into a trap,
And loud for help began to cry.
The Countryman by chance pass'd by,
To whom he call'd: 'Have pity, pray,
Nor take a harmless life away.'

The man replied: 'I'll set you free,
If on your oath you promise me
On all occasions to refrain
From hurting me.' The Snake was fain
To swear; on which the man untied him;
But soon great ill-luck did betide him.

Whilst they together walk'd
along,
The Snake, with hunger
being stung,
With fury at the man did
snap,
But he escap'd him by good
hap.



'Is this,' quoth he, 'an honest way,
Men for good services to pay?
Was it for this I made you swear,
To injure me you would forbear?'

'I'm faint with hunger,' said the Snake;
'Necessity all Laws will break.'

The man then begg'd for a respite,
Till they could both the case recite
To some impartial Judge. The Snake
To this did no objection make.
Together they again walk'd on,
And met the Raven and his son,
To whom the Snake did his debate
With the poor Countryman relate.
They hoped to come in for a share,
And said: 'You need not him to spare.'

'You cannot,' said the Snake, 'dispute
My right now, and I've gain'd the suit.'

'No, 'tis not so far gone,' said he,
'That thieves should judge 'twixt you and me;
Besides, there should at least be four
To weigh the matter, if not more.'

'Tis very well,' the Snake replied,
Who straight the Wolf and Bear espied,
And said that umpires they should be.

The Countryman thought: 'Woe on me!
Four greedy rogues I see before me,



Who all are eager to devour me,
Two Ravens, and the Wolf and Bear.'
And too well founded was his fear;
For they declar'd, all in one breath,
The Snake might put the man to death,
Making necessity a Law,
In which this murder made no flaw.

The Snake now like an arrow shot
At him, to kill him on the spot;
But he escap'd a second time,
And cried: 'It is a heinous crime,
That you by dint of foulest play,
Attempt to take my life away,
To which you have no sort of right.'
'Who says so?' quoth the Snake, 'base wight!
Have not you twice been sentenc'd, Sir?'

'Yes,' said he, 'by the Wolf and Bear,
Who like to murder and to steal;
But to the King I do appeal.
Come with me, and let him decide,
And by his sentence I'll abide;
Be 't right or wrong, I will not mind,
And to my fate I'll be resign'd.'

'To this the Snake will not object,'
Quoth Growler; for he did expect
That you, my Liege, would cook the dish
For them, according to their wish.

They all before you did appear,
The Snake, the Ravens, Wolf and Bear,
And some of them brought all their Clan,
In hopes of feasting on the man ;
But Growler's whelps made such a rout,
That from the Court you drove them out.

The Man for Justice did implore you,
And laid his cruel case before you :
That, whilst from death he sav'd the snake,
His life he now away would take.

The Snake the truth of this confess'd ;
But said, he was by hunger press'd.

You weigh'd the Case of both maturely :
To doom the Man to death was surely
For a kind act a bad reward.
To starve, you thought, was likewise hard.
This to your Barons you did state,
Who went, the matter to debate.
Most of them were too much inclin'd
To condemn and devour the hind ;
But you for Reynard sent at last,
And telling him all, that had pass'd,
You left the Case to his decision.

He said : ' To judge with due precision,
I first must see the Serpent bound
At the same place where he was found.'
This done, quoth Reynard : ' Now they are
On the same footing as they were.

The man hath now the choice to take
An oath from him, and save the Snake ;
But if he leaves him where he is,
He likewise will not do amiss.
This (with all defence for a better)
Is my opinion of the matter.'

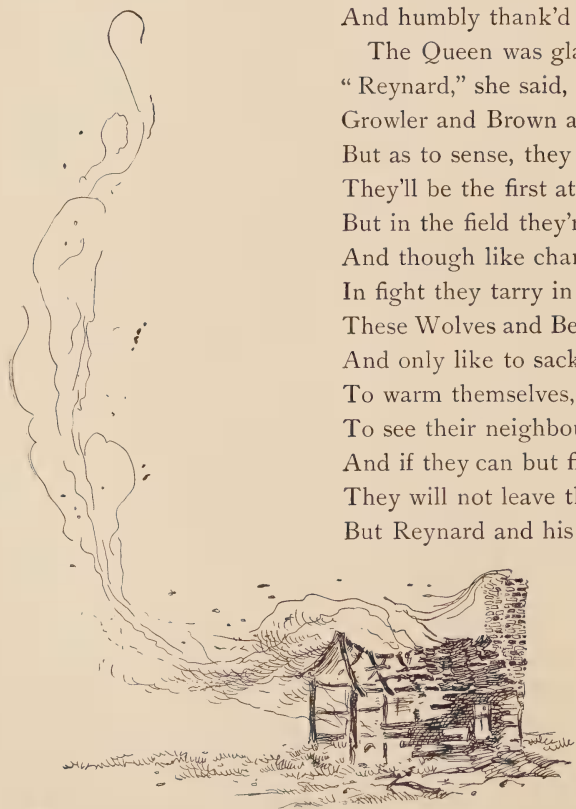
You with this judgment were contented,
And all your Barons too assented.
The Man was set at liberty,
And humbly thank'd your Majesty."

The Queen was glad to second Pry.
"Reynard," she said, "is shrewd and sly;
Growler and Brown are blust'ring bullies,
But as to sense, they are mere cullies;
They'll be the first at every feast,
But in the field they're last and least,
And though like champions they appear,
In fight they tarry in the rear.
These Wolves and Bears are fierce and savage,
And only like to sack and ravage.
To warm themselves, they would desire
To see their neighbour's house on fire,
And if they can but fill their gullet,
They will not leave the poor a pullet.
But Reynard and his kin are true,

And faithfully attach'd to
you.

If anything he hath mis-
done,

Consider, he's not made
of stone ;



And at the same time you will grant,
That his advice we often want.
Then please to show him mercy, pray."

The King replied: "I'll not say nay.
'Tis true he did decide the cause,
Which you related, with applause;
But he's a deep one in his heart,
And often makes those people smart
Who deal with him; the Wolf, the Bear,
The Crow, the Cat, the Ram, the Hare
And many more. One lost his life,
One lacks an ear, and one his wife.
Then tell me pray, on what pretence
I am to pardon his offence."

"'Tis not his innocence we plead,"
Said she; "as friends we intercede."
The King stept back into the hall,
Where Reynard's Kinsmen, great and small,
Their cousin to support, were met.
He found, they were a num'rous set;
But full as many in the hall
Did not befriend the Fox at all.

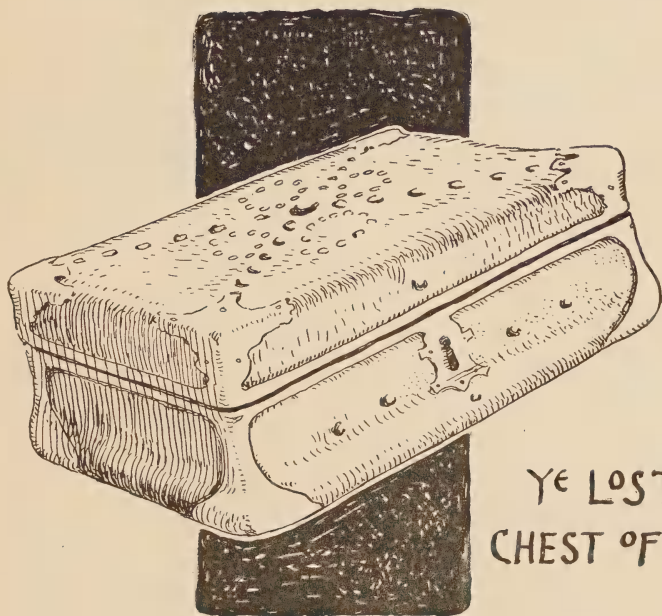
"Reynard," said he, "how did you dare
To kill my messenger, the Hare?
And to induce the silly Ram
To bring her head here for a sham?
For nothing else was in the sack,
Which Simple carried on his back."

“Alas!” said Reynard, “Woe betide me!
I wish the grave did long since hide me.
But if to hear me you consent,
I trust you’ll find me innocent.
The Ram, that thief and murderer,
Hath robb’d me of a treasure, Sir,
The like of which could not be found,
If you walk’d all the World around.
These treasures, which I did intend
To send to you, caus’d Pussey’s end,
Whom Simple on the road did slay,
And with the jewels made away.
Oh! that we could but find them out;
But this I have no hopes about.”

“If they are but above the ground,”
Said Pry, “I hope they will be found.
Pray tell us of what kind they were,
And we’ll search for them everywhere.”

“All labour will in vain be spent,”
Quoth he; “they are so excellent,
That their possessors, for their heart,
Would not consent with them to part.
If this affair is told my wife,
It will occasion endless strife;
For she by no means would consent,
That by the Ram they should be sent.
Here I am doom’d to lose my time,
Though innocent of any crime;

But if from hence I get away,
Through every Country I will stray,
And though my life it were to cost,
I'll try to find what I have lost."



YE LOST
CHEST °F JEWELS..



Part IV Cantol

The Second Pardon

Argument

A long account we now shall hear,
Which Reynard gave of jewels dear,
A precious Mirror, Comb and Ring,
Sent by him to the Queen and King.
The King to him his pardon grants,
At which the angry Growler rants.
He will not hear of a discharge,
Till Reynard answers to his charge.

“Permit me, for my consolation,”
Quoth Reynard, “in a short relation,
To tell my friends how rich and dear
The jewels were which I sent here,
And which you never did receive.”
“Make haste,” said Noble, “you have leave.”

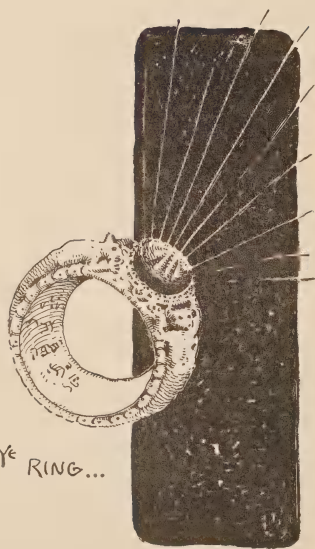
“The first,” quoth Reynard, “was a Ring,
To be presented to the King.
Of precious things it was compos’d,
And hidden powers it inclos’d;

For on the inside (please to know)
Some words enamel'd it did show,
Which to explain nobody knew,
But Abram Treves, a German Jew,
Who could all foreign lingo prate
From Gravesend up to Billingsgate;
And besides that, he was expert
In every deep and magic art.
To him this Ring I once did show,
'Maishter,' quoth he, 'I let you know,
Dis is a varry vondrous Ring;
I never saw more curioush ting,
De vords which are in lashure set
Were brought from Paradise by Sheth.
Tree names are dere in Hebrew written;
Deir owner never can be shmitten
Vith foul disease; from magic spell
And tunder it secures him well;
He can't be shtarv'd by heat or cold,
And tousand yearsh he may grow old.'

The Ring inclos'd a curious stone,
Which bright like any lantern shone;
Carbuncle, I believe, 'tis hight,
It blaz'd like flaming coal at night,
And strangest virtues it possess'd:
Those who by sickness were oppress'd,
If they but touch'd this wondrous stone,
Their pain was in a moment gone.

Whoever wore it on his hand,
 Could walk on seas as on dry land;
 From fire he nothing had to fear;
 His enemies durst not come near,
 For like the Gorgon shield in fight,
 It screen'd him by it's dazzling light;
 And if attack'd by whole battalions,
 He could drub them like tatterdemalions,
 Nor pois'nous draft, nor magic charm
 Could kill him, nor could do him harm.
 If any one to hurt him strove,
 It chang'd his hatred into love.
 In short I never should have done,
 Telling the virtues of this stone.
 I did select it from my treasure,
 Because I thought 'twould give you pleasure,
 And that nobody but our King
 Deserv'd to wear this precious thing.
 You are the Noblest of us all,
 And so may good luck you befall,
 As it was with a pure intent,
 That I to you this jewel sent.

A Comb and Mirror should have been
 Deliver'd to our gracious Queen.
 My Liege, I am asham'd to say,
 That with my wife I had a fray,
 Because it griev'd her very heart
 With those two fav'rite toys to part.

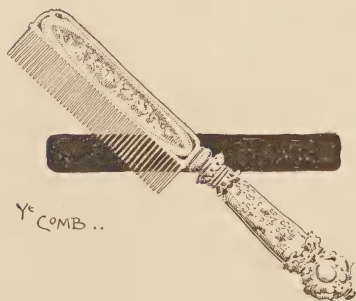


Ye RING...

Now they are lost to all intent,
And what I'm left most to lament,
Is that they were not even seen,
Or heard of by our noble Queen,
Who, whilst you were so much offended,
To plead for me hath condescended.

The Comb, with golden wire inlaid,
Of bone of Civet-cat was made.
This wild Cat of a curious kind
On Indian plains we only find.
All other Creatures love it well,
On account of its balmy smell.
This odour, when the beast expires,
Into the bones of it retires.
Of such a bone (as I have said)
The Comb was beautifully made,
And with amazing art and cost
With half-rais'd work it was emboss'd.

There you could see the famous story
Of Paris, in his days of glory,
When three Goddesses for a whim,
Came down to be review'd by him.
For Juno, Jove's majestic Dame,
Pallas, his daughter of known fame,
And sea-born Venus, Queen of love,
To claim a golden Apple strove ;



But as they never could agree,
They now to him repair'd all three.
The Fairest was to have the fruit,
And he was to decide their suit.
Sir Paris thought the case too nice
To be determin'd in a trice,
And ere he ventur'd to decide,
He took them one by one aside.

‘I'm sure,’ said Juno with an air,
‘Your eyes must see that I'm most fair;
But to reward you for your pain,
Great riches you for me shall gain.’

‘Give *me* the apple with good grace,’
Quoth Pallas with a prudish face.
‘You know, 'tis not a haughty air,
But prudence, which adorns the Fair.
Then if to *me* you give my due,
Wisdom and pow'r I'll grant to you.’

‘Let not,’ said Venus with a smile,
‘Or pow'r, or riches you beguile.
Your father Priam is a King,
Who hath enough of everything;
And as to warfare and such pother,
You have got Hector for a brother,
On whom in wars you can rely,
And all your enemies defy.
If in *my* favour you decide,
I shall present you with a bride

Most lovely, Menelaus's Dame
Of Greece ; fair Helen is her name.
She's handsome, of the noblest race,
Endow'd with beauty and with grace ;
And you'll allow that such a wife
Will be the blessing of your life.
Take her and give the prize to *me*.
' Here 'tis with all my heart,' said he.

Venus made good to him her word,
And help'd him, from her Grecian Lord
To steal fair Helen, and with joy
He carried off his bride to Troy.

All this did on my Comb appear,
And was with labels made more clear ;
For at the foot of each fair Dame
You read her speech, and eke her name.

The Mirror was the last and best,
By much excelling all the rest.
A Beryl serv'd instead of glass.
It show'd all things which came to pass,
Within a dozen miles around.
Besides, if any one was found,
Who on his eye a speck had got,
Or in his face a pimpled spot,
A peep into this glass was sure
To prove an instantaneous cure.
The frame, in which the Mirror stood,
Was of the choicest Shittim-wood.



No worms this fragrant wood attack,
Nor is it apt to warp and crack,
And therefore 'tis not to be sold
For less than its own weight in gold.
Like Ebony 'tis black and bright,
Solid and firm but wondrous light,
And of the same wood (so 'tis said)
That famous saddle-horse was made,
On which with Magellona fair
Count Peter canter'd through the air.
This frame was carv'd most curiously:
Each part display'd some history
Or fable, which below was told
In letters cast of purest gold.

The first partition show'd a *Nag*,
Who to a *Hind* betray'd a *Stag*.
It was the swiftness of the Hart,
Which kindled envy in his heart;
He therefore went and told the Hind:
'Get on my back, and we shall find
A mighty Stag in yonder grounds,
As fat, as e'er was chas'd by hounds.
I'll take you to the copse anon,
And you shall get nice venison.'

The Hind did mount and off they went,
And of the Stag they soon got scent;
The hounds him follow'd in full cry;
The Stag o'er hill and dale did fly.



And being vigorous and strong,
 The chase was troublesome and long.
 The horse was almost tir'd to death.
 'Pray, let me take a little breath,'
 He said, 'or else you'll break my wind.'
 'Not I, forsooth,' replied the Hind.
 'Twas you, who led me on this chase;
 Then feel my spurs, and mend your pace.'

*So Envy, while on harm'tis bent,
 Contrives oft its own punishment.*

The fable of the *Dog* and *Ass*
 Stood next upon my Looking-glass.
 One Master they serv'd both together;
 The Lap-dog slept on beds of feather;
 At dinner with his Lord he sat,
 And fed on nicest meat and fat;
 His master on his lap oft took him,
 And there he'd feed and kiss and stroke him;
 For which the Dog did never fail
 To lick his hand, and wag his tail.
 The Ass, who oft of this took notice,
 Thought to himself: 'I don't know how
 'tis,

This little, lazy, puny whelp
 Hath leave to wheedle, fawn and yelp,
 And tease his master, while poor I
 Am left to fret and mortify.
 I'm sure, my master, with a score
 Of whelps like this, could do no more



In twelve months time, than I alone
In single weeks have often done.
He feasts on sweetbreads and on gristles,
While I must live on fern and thistles,
And whilst he snores in sloth secure,
The beating tempest I endure ;
Nay, saucy boys around me flock,
And make of me a laughing-stock.
In troth, this will no longer do ;
I'll win my master's favour too.'

By chance his master came along ;
Jack Ass inton'd his fav'rite song,
And with a loud : ' Y-aw, y-aw,'
He leapt on him and lick'd his jaw,
And wagg'd his tail about his ears,
Till from his eyes he drew the tears.
The master, all in rage and pain,
Call'd out, to have the bumpkin slain ;
On which the servants came out all,
And cudgel'd him into his stall,
Where he remain'd just what he was.

And so sometimes a two-legg'd Ass
Men of high rank and manners apes,
By awkward bows and lowly scrapes,
Till, by meanness or by chance,
To place or pension he advance ;
But then the dignity he wears
As sows would jewels in their ears.

Then let all Asses drudge away,
And feed on thistles and on hay ;
For when they're rais'd to rank and place,
Their Country faces it disgrace.

If y'are not tir'd to hear me prate,
Another story I'll relate,
Which on the mirror was engrav'd,
How *Gib* once to my Sire behav'd.
They both together took a walk,
And after various friendly talk
They made a solemn league, and swore
That they would separate no more,
And that, if huntsmen came to chase them,
Together they would stand, and face them.

Too soon they heard the dreadful whoop
Of hunters, coming in a troop,
And as the hounds did louder yelp,
Gib, all aghast, cried out for help.
My father told him : ' Take a heart,
And my whole budget I'll impart ;
But mind your promise to be true,
And stand by me, as I'll by you.'

Gib said : ' Be all that as it may,
I know but of one single way,
Which from the hounds can rescue me.'
He nimbly climb'd upon a tree,
And left my Sire to stand the brunt
Of hounds in cry and whooping hunt,



While he look'd on and said: 'To ope
Your budget, you have now full scope.'
The hunt came up and horns did sound,
To cheer the rider, horse and hound.
My father for his life did run,
The greedy beagles for to shun;
Until his den with great effort
He reach'd, and got safe into port.

Thus by the friend he was betray'd,
On whom he most relied for aid;
And many people in that way
A friend in danger will betray.

The fourth partition did contain
A story of the *Wolf* and *Crane*.
It show'd how meanly Growler paid
A surgeon for his timely aid.
Whilst he was roving o'er a ground,
The carcase of a horse he found;
The Ravens had not left him much,
But still his appetite was such,
That he the very bones would suck,
Of which one in his gullet stuck.
He was much for his life in fear,
And sent for surgeons far and near.
If anybody could relieve him,
Said he, great treasures he would give him.
The Crane to him his service proffer'd,
To whom a great reward he offer'd.

He thrust his bill into his throat,
And with some pain the bone came out.

‘You bungler,’ cried the Wolf, ‘how sore
You’ve made my throat! Do so no more,
Or else be sure, I’ll make you rue;
For once, Sir, I will pardon you.’

‘Nay, I’ve achiev’d the cure,’ said he,
‘And should be glad to touch my fee.’

‘Your fee!’ cried Growler, ‘are you mad?
’Tis I, who all the pain have had;
If one of us can claim a fee,
’Tis due to nobody but me,
For calmly letting you withdraw
Your head unhurt out of my jaw.’

All rogues in this ungrateful way
Past services are wont to pay.

These stories, which I have related,
Were on the Mirror amply stated
In words and figures. I confess,
I was not worthy to possess
This precious jewel. When I sent it,
I to the Queen wish’d to present it.
It griev’d my little Rankey’s heart,
When with it he was forc’d to part;
For he before it skipp’d about,
And wagg’d his tail, and primm’d his snout.



REYNARD THE FOX

I never thought that Pussey's end
The sending of it should portend;
For better friends, I do declare,
I knew not than the Ram and Hare,
Or else I would not by them both
Have sent such precious things, in troth.
But I'm determin'd, Sir, to know
What is become of them, I vow;
For theft and murder will come out,
However they may lurk about;
And may be, some here present are,
Who could best tell, who kill'd the Hare.

My Liege, I don't pretend, a King
Should recollect each trifling thing;
Or else you possibly might know
What zeal my father once did show
To yours, when he was very ill,
And got well, through my father's skill;
For although you are pleas'd to say,
We serv'd you ne'er in any way,
My father in his time was known
To be with yours in great renown.
Of healing sickness, he could teach
Wise lessons to the oldest leech.
May be, you never have been told
(For you were then but few months old)
How your Sire lay so sick a-bed,
That with a tea-spoon he was fed.

Physicians from all parts were come,
From Berlin, Edinburgh and Rome;
But howsoe'er they cupp'd and blister'd,
And purg'd and vomited and clyster'd,
It grew worse with him every day,
Until my father came this way,
Who found him almost without breath,
Complaining, he was sick to death.

'My Liege, to save you,' said my Sire,
'I should be ready to expire.'

His head at first my father shook,
When at the King's tongue he did look.

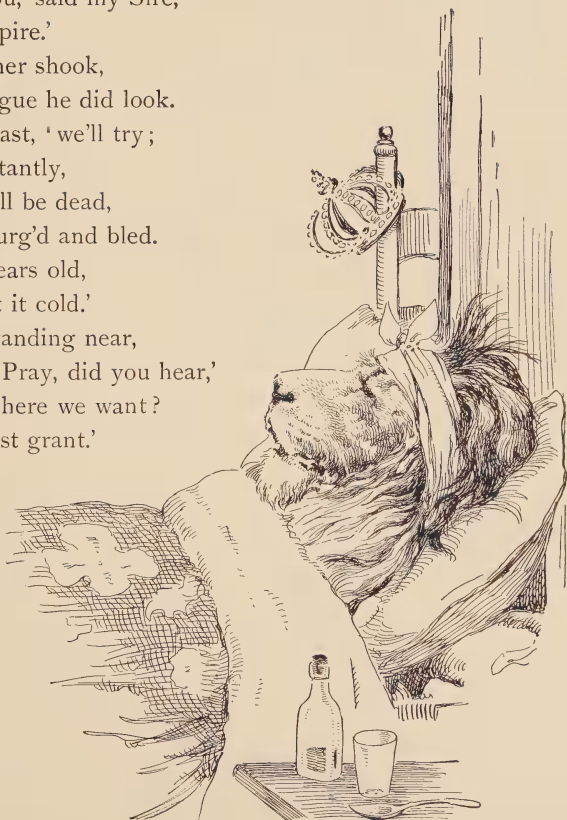
'One thing,' he said at last, 'we'll try;
But it must be done instantly,
Else in a few hours you'll be dead,
No more need you be purg'd and bled.
But a Wolf's liver, six years old,
May save you, if you eat it cold.'

The Wolf, who was standing near,
Was much perplex'd. 'Pray, did you hear,'
Your father said, 'what here we want?
Your liver you to us must grant.'

The Wolf exclaim'd:

'Upon my word,
I'm not yet five years
old, My Lord.'

'That will appear,'
my Sire replied,
'Soon as your liver we
have tried.'



In short, however he did quiver
 And quake, he could not save his liver,
 Your father ate it, and anon
 He felt that all his pain was gone.
 The King then call'd my father *Sir*
 And did great praise on him confer;
 He made him wear a Doctor's hood,
 And high in his esteem he stood.

Past services are now forgot,
 Since Knaves have trust and favour got,
 Who nought for right and justice care,
 But only mind their own affair,
 Nay, King and Country, for the sake
 Of interest, they will forsake,
 Just like the Wolf, who did not care
 His liver to the King to spare;
*For what's begot of sordid seed,
 Ne'er aims at an heroic deed."*

"This tale," said Noble, "which you tell
 Of your late Sire, sounds mighty well.
 But if such service he hath done,
 It must be many years ago;
 Past my remembrance it must be,
 Nor was it ever told to me;
 But as to *your* exploits, I own,
 Much less of them I wish were known.
 If it is all a false report,
 For your sake I am sorry for 't;



But little good we hear of you."

"Report doth not of me speak true,"

Quoth Reynard, "and I hope you'll own,

That to Yourself my zeal I've shown ;

Nor do I, Sir, presume to boast :

All merit is in duty lost.

You'll recollect that heretofore

Growler and I once caught a boar.

Perchance, as You were passing by

Whilst we kill'd him, you heard his cry ;

You came and said, that with the Queen

A hunting you had likewise been,

But having had a wretched day,

You wish'd to share with us our prey.

Growler, who was not fond of this,

Between his teeth did mumble : 'Ye—s ;

But I with hearty glee call'd out :

'My Liege, pray, who shall help about ?

Though we have but this single Boar,

You are as welcome, as if 'twere more.'

'Let Growler cut up,' You replied.

With this he seem'd well satisfied ;

A quarter he dealt out to You,

And to the Queen a quarter too,

The rest he all devour'd alone,

And scarcely left for me a bone.

When you your pittance of the Boar

Had eat, you wish'd for something more,

But Growler little minded it,
 And did not offer you a bit;
 For which you hit him such a blow,
 That down his cheeks the gore did flow.
 'Henceforth learn better to divide,'
 You said, 'or I shall taw your hide.
 Be gone, and get us more to eat.'

'I'll go with him, if you think 't meet,'
 Said I, and you said: 'Yes, you may.'

Growler had rather wish'd to stay,
 For full of blood was all his face,
 And howling he began the chase;
 But soon a fine fat fawn we caught,
 Which made you smile, when it was brought.
 You told me, that in case of need
 I knew well how to hunt with speed,
 And you bade me divide the booty.

'One half,' said I, 'is Yours in duty,
 The other to the Queen belongs,
 And to your young ones heart and lungs.
 The head to Growler (for 'tis sweet),
 And I'm contented with the feet.'
 You ask'd: 'Who taught you this, sly varlet?'

'Yon Doctor with his cap of scarlet,'
 Said I; 'from him I learn'd to know,
 How to distribute Fawn, or Sow.'

So Growler's gluttony brought shame
 On him. With all Wolves 'tis the same;



Y-
FAWN ..

If their advantage they can find,
Nor law, nor justice they will mind.
Woe to the City and the Land,
Where Wolves have got the upperhand!

 This single case I'll only mention,
My Liege, to prove my good intention,
And that I can with truth profess
That all is Yours which I possess.
If you think of the Fawn and Boar,
You'll judge, which of us loves you more;
And yet to Growler and to Brown
The greatest honours now are shown,
And Reynard guilty must appear,
While You his plea refuse to hear.
I am accus'd, but I repeat it,
Whate'er my fate may be, I'll meet it.
If I deserve to be reprov'd,
Let it by witnesses be prov'd,
Or else let my antagonists
Meet me, like Men, in open lists,
And let each party for the sake
Of justice, life and honour stake.
This, Sir, is what the Laws command,
And what in justice I demand."

Quoth Noble: "Never be it said,
That I the course of Justice stay'd.
Reynard hath been accus'd ('tis true),
That Puss feloniously he slew,

And when the Ram brought us her head,
It griev'd me much that she was dead.
But since none of us here can tell
Through whom this hard fate her befell,
To Reynard We forgive the past,
In hopes that he'll prove true at last.
If other people will complain,
Redress by Law they shall obtain,
If witnesses of good report
Can prove the facts in open Court."

Quoth Reynard: "Many thanks to You,
My Liege, for giving me my due.
For I declare upon my oath,
To part with Pussey I was loth,
Though I did not suspect at all
That such a fate would her befall."

Thus Reynard did with artful speech
All who were present overreach;
He made them swallow everything
About his Mirror, Comb and Ring;
And thinking that his tale was true,
They pitied and consol'd him too.
The King, desirous to obtain
These precious toys, could not refrain
From telling him: "Pray, do not fret;
Your jewels you again may get;
You have my leave to range about
Through all my Realm to find them out,

And my support shall not be wanting."

"You are too kind," said Reynard, canting;
"If you'll take vengeance for the theft
And murder, to me be it left,
To use all diligence and care,
At once t' explore this dark affair.
To You I shall but for support
In case of greatest need resort,
Although it is my firm intent,
To you those jewels to present,
And if by good luck I succeed,
It will give joy to me, indeed."

The King, much pleas'd, gave full belief
To the intriguing, lying thief,
Who free permission did obtain
To stroll about through his domain.

But Growler grew exceeding wrath.
"I am," said he, "surpris'd in troth,
That you this wicked rogue believ'd,
By whom you've been so oft deceiv'd.
He is made up of tricks and lies,
And cheats you still before your eyes.
But ere he goes you'll hear and see,
He'll not come off so cheap with *me*.
Three things I have against him still;
Let him deny them if he will,
But he shall not go out of Court,
Though I must even fight for 't.



‘There should be witnesses,’ you say;
But where is one to take them, pray?
The artful Knave is much too sly,
T’ offend, when witnesses are by;
And when he talks, there is no scope
For any one, his mouth to ope.
His friendship hath done good to none;
For he hates you and every one;
But he shall not stir from the spot,
Till I revenge on him have got.”





The Defiance

Argument

Growler complains, that once his wife
For Reynard's sake near lost her life.
Surly relates, how in a well
For him a sacrifice she fell.
Reynard these charges both denies,
And calls them calumnies and lies.
The wolf declares, that they must fight,
To try who's wrong and who is right.

"This fox," quoth *Growler*, "I protest,
Is an arch villain, at the best.
He oft hath wrong'd me in my life,
And brought disgrace upon my wife.
Once to a mill-pond he did lead her,
And through the mud to wade, he bid her.
He told her: 'If you'll get a pail
Of finest trout, hang out your tail,
And you'll get more in half an hour
Than in six meals you can devour.'

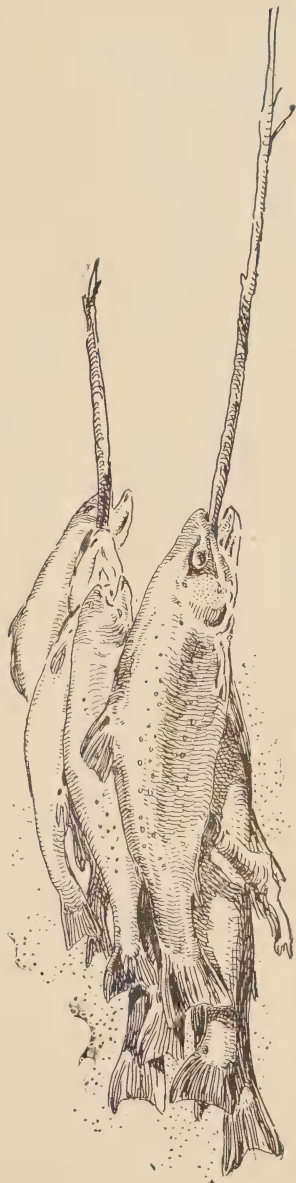
When she had waded through the mud,
Till in the deepest mire she stood,
The villain bade her to hang out
Her tail, to catch her dish of trout.
It was just in the winter-season,
And by degrees the ice did freeze on
Her tail, until she felt at last,
That in the ice it stuck quite fast;
But thinking it was with the weight
Of th' fish, she pull'd with all her might.
Reynard perceiving this, alas!
I'm loth to tell what next did pass:
The rascal came and bother'd her,
While she, poor creature, could not stir.
This I defy him to deny;
For while I happen'd to pass by,
I caught him in the mischievous act,
Which almost made me run distract.
I cried: 'Base rogue, what dost thou there?'
The villain, seeing I was near,
Took to his heels and ran away;
I came in hurry and dismay,
And was forc'd through the mud to wade,
And in cold water long to bathe,
Ere I my suff'ring wife could rescue,
And free from bondage her distress'd cue;
Nor did I quite succeed at last,
For near one third of it stuck fast



In th' ice. My wife began to bawl,
And rais'd the peasants, great and small,
Who in the mill-pond soon espied us,
And most unmercifully plied us.
'Twas at great hazard, that my wife
And I at last could save our life,
For, what with cudgels, prongs and flails,
With broomsticks, pokers, tongs and pails,
Both men and women charg'd us home.
'Look here,' they said, 'these thieves are come,
To steal our Ewes and Lambs away;
Let us the daring robbers slay.'
'Twas our good luck that night came on,
Or else we should have been undone.
We to the pond again did rush,
And hid ourselves among the brush;
On which the peasants ceas'd th' attack,
And cursing us, they all fell back.
My Liege, for this bold ruffian here
No punishment is too severe."

"We heard you," quoth King *Noble*, "pray
Let's see what *Reynard* hath to say."

"My Liege," quoth he, "if this was true,
I durst not show my face to You.
I to a pond have show'd her once,
But, what with th' dulness of her sconce,
What with her eagerness, the route
She kept not which I pointed out.



Besides, she loiter'd, till at last
Her tail did in the ice stick fast.
If she in time had pull'd it out,
She would have got her fill of trout.
*To him who drinks till the last sip,
The cruse-lid on his nose will slip,
And those who are for ever craving,
Are apt to lose by dint of saving.*
So Surly with her covetousness
Did bring herself into distress.
Look now, what thanks from them I got,
That to assist her, I did trot.
I did my best to drag her out;
But she's so heavy and so stout,
That all my labour was in vain.
Then Growler came and bawl'd amain;
A thief and wanton wretch he call'd me,
And I must own, his wrath appall'd me;
He rav'd and ranted, curs'd and swore,
And with his claws the ground he tore.
When two dogs fight about their prey,
One of them must give up the fray;
Therefore I had no mind to stay,
And wisely took myself away.
His fury did not even cease,
When he his wife came to release,
And till this very day You see
What spiteful grudge he bears to me.

If by the Clowns they were pursued,
I'm apt to think it did them good,
Because it kept them both in breath,
Or else they had been chill'd to death.
This is however *their* affair,
And little for it do I care;
But Growler ought to be asham'd
On his own wife to cast a blame.
Ask her; she can best answer You,
And would complain if he spoke true."

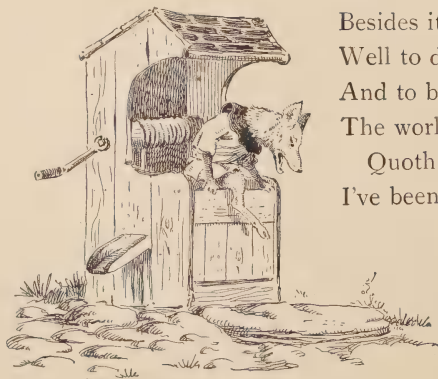
"Reynard," said Surly, "you are sly;
You scruple not to tell a lie,
And to turn matters with such art
As to make other people smart.
Of this a story I can tell:
One night I found you in a well;
The rope had buckets at each end,
In one of which you did descend,
But never could get up again.
I heard you cry with fear and pain,
And came to ask what was the matter.
You soon began to feign and flatter;
'If you are fond of eating fish,'
You said, 'here you can have your wish.
A bucket you above will find,
If to come down you have a mind.
I such a copious meal did make,
That I have got the belly-ache.'

I step in, and to my surprise,
 As I went down, I saw you rise.
 I ask'd you how this came to pass.
 You answer'd: 'So it always was,
*When fools are going down, the wise
 At their expense are seen to rise.'*

When you got out, you ran away,
 And I was left there all the day;
 A Clown descried me in the well,
 And to his friends he ran to tell:
 'The Wolf, who steals our lambs and sheep,
 Is got into a draw-well deep;
 If you will come and pull him out,
 We'll treat him with a cudgel-bout.'
 It was most pitiful to see,
 How they did taw and curry me;
 I never felt so hot a day,
 And narrowly I got away."

Quoth Reynard: "'Twas because I knew
 It would be better to leave you
 Than get myself into the scrape;
 Because we could not both escape.
 Besides it serv'd to caution you,
 Well to discern what's false or true,
 And to beware with whom you treat.
 The world is full of sly deceit."

Quoth Growler: "This is but too true;
 I've been so oft deceiv'd by you,



That I cannot relate it all.
 The foulest hap did me befall,
 When to the monkeys once you led me,
 Who worried and almost flay'd me.
 The she-ape was a monstrous beast,
 And foul and filthy was her nest.
 You call'd her Aunt, to take me in,
 And make the monster tear my skin."

Here Reynard interrupted him
 And said: "It is a curious whim,
 Or Growler is a Jackanapes,
 To talk of monkeys and of apes.
 It may be now three years ago,
 When on his *grand tour* he would go;
 I was with him when he did prance
 And play the Nobleman in France,
 Till his last guinea he had spent.
 One day to the Baboons we went.
 Those Baboons are not of our Kin,
 Nor was it to take Growler in,
 That I the She-Baboon call'd *Aunt*;
 But knowing that she lik'd to vaunt,
 I thus my speech chose to preface
 Merely to captivate her Grace;
 Or else she might be hang'd for me,
 For a most ugly beast is she.

Ye
 SHE-BABOON.



Along a by-road we did stroll,
 When we discover'd a deep hole.
 Growler began his old complaint,
 That he with hunger was quite faint;
 I said: 'The Owner of this cave
 Some store of meat, perhaps may have;
 If that's the case, we of his fare
 Should try to come in for a share.'

Quoth he: 'Well, Reynard, go in, pray;
 Meantime below this tree I'll stay.
 You are more eloquent than I,
 And you know best how to apply.
 If you find that there is good cheer,
 Come back and let me know it here.'

I went, although I plainly saw
 That he used me for a Cat's paw;
 But when I came in, I must own,
 I almost fell into a swoon;
 For there I with a hideous set
 Of fierce and ugly monsters met,
 And I was forc'd to creep along
 At bo-peep through the filthy throng,
 Till I came to their dam at last.
 I found her lying in her nest;
 Wide was her mouth, her tooth and nail
 Were sharp, and long her daggling tail.
 I thought she was the devil's dam,
 And all aghast, I call'd her Ma'am.





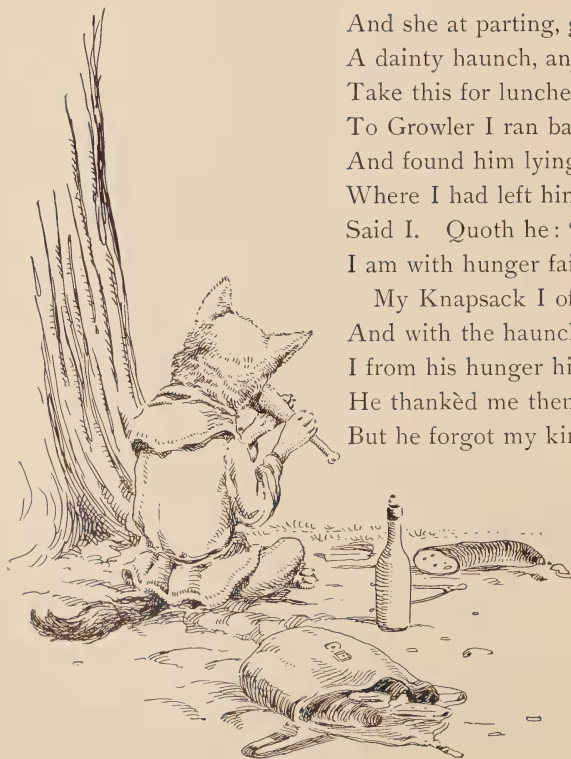
And Aunt, and anything, for fear;
For her young black-guards too drew near;
They were as uncouth as their mother,
And chatter'd loud and made a pother;
Up to their ears in rotten hay
And grovelling deep in filth they lay;
She was as tall as Growler is;
Some of her whelps were not much less.
I was alone among this crew,
And to tell truths there, would not do.
I therefore feign'd as if I knew her,
And very courtly went up to her.

‘Dear Aunt,’ said I, ‘I’m glad to see
You and your pretty family.
What sprightly children you have got!
They look like a King’s sons, I wot,
And very much like you they are.
If I had known that here you were,
Long since I should have call’d on you,
To see how my young cousins do.’
She readily took up the cue,
And feign’d as if full well she knew
That I a nephew was to her.
‘Be welcome here,’ said she, ‘good Sir,
To see my nephew gives me pleasure,
And for my children ’tis a treasure;
For with your kind advice, they will
In manners be improving still.’

So I was for a well-tim'd word,
 Receiv'd with open arms, My Lord,
 And yet I long'd to get away ;
 But she said : ' No, Sir, you must stay,
 And of pot-luck must take a part,
 Ere we allow you to depart.'

This said, the table soon was fraught
 With choicest victuals, which she brought,
 Of wild fowl, venison and cake ;
 Heav'n knows where she all this did take.
 Thus I sat down and eat my fill,
 And she at parting, gave me still
 A dainty haunch, and told me : ' Pray,
 Take this for luncheon on your way.'
 To Growler I ran back apace,
 And found him lying in the place,
 Where I had left him. ' Pray, what cheer?'
 Said I. Quoth he : ' 'T goes very queer ;
 I am with hunger fairly spent.'

My Knapsack I of course unbent,
 And with the haunch I had receiv'd,
 I from his hunger him reliev'd.
 He thankèd me then for the boon ;
 But he forgot my kindness soon.



When he had done, he said: 'Pray, now
I wish that you would let me know
Who 'tis that lives beneath this hill,
And how you found it, well or ill.'

I told him plainly, that the nest
Was foul and filthy at the best;
But that there was good store of meat,
And if he would go in and eat,
Above all things I would advise,
To hold his tongue, if he was wise.

*For those, who are for ever bent
On censuring, must oft repent,
And they are oft oblig'd to fast,
While others get a good repast.*

This I exhorted him to mind,
If he a dinner wish'd to find.
I caution'd him to take great care,
Of illtim'd meddling to beware;
If he, neglecting what I said,
Hath for his petulance been paid,
I'm sure it was *his* fault, *not mine*,
At which he was left to repine.

But fools are known to have this vice,
That they will never take advice,
And Growler, in his stubborn way,
Scorn'd to take mine and trudg'd away.

When to the Baboon's nest he came,
And saw the young-ones and the Dame,

He, startled at their ugly features,
Call'd out: 'My soul, what hideous creatures!
If they were mine, I would not own them,
But rather tuck them up, or drown them.'

'Pray, who the dickens sent you here,'
Cried the Baboon, 'to interfere?
What bus'ness, you rude clown, have you,
Thus to rail at my little crew?
Reynard, Sir, I can let you know,
Thinks well of them. He said just now
That they were well behav'd, and fit
At a King's table for to sit.
He call'd them cousins, and did love them;
If you've a meaner notion of them,
Nobody, Sir, call'd for you here,
Nor your opinion wants to hear.'

He still call'd rudely for some meat.
'Make haste,' he said, 'I want to eat.
'Tis better you give it to me
Than to these Elves, whoso they be.'
He of their victuals would lay hold,
But they seiz'd on him, young and old;
They bit and scratch'd, and tore his skin,
Till he in haste ran out again.
In a sad plight he did appear,
For in the fray he lost an ear,



And look'd all bloody and uncouth.
I ask'd: 'Did you blab out the truth?'

He said: 'I spoke just as I found it,
And for this I was sorely wounded;
But if the cursèd Dame were here,
She should pay for it very dear.
Her babes were such misshapen creatures
I ridiculed their impish features.
When in such fury they seiz'd on me,
That they had very nigh undone me.'

'How foolishly,' said I, 'you did!
Was 't this you had by me been bid?
I told you, you should strive to cozen
The beldam, and should call her Cousin,
And friendly ask her "How d'ye do
With all your charming little crew?"'

'Not on your life,' retorted he;
'They are no Cousins, fit for me,
And ere for such they shall be own'd,
I'll sooner see them hang'd or drown'd.'

Thus all was owing, as You see,
To his misconduct, not to me.
The truth of this, he best can tell,
For he must recollect it well."

The Wolf at last to him replied:
"Reynard, it matters not to chide;
We must decide by single fight,
Which of us two is wrong or right.

You talk about the monkey's nest,
Pretending that by hunger press'd,
By you I kindly was reliev'd.
A bone was all that I receiv'd,
From which the meat was all gnaw'd off.
You only say this for a scoff;
You oft have slander'd and abus'd me,
And have before the King accus'd me
Of trait'rous schemes against his life.
You've, worst of all, betray'd my wife;
You told the King a heap of lies
Of treasures hid, and precious toys.
With all those misdeeds old and new,
I charge you and will fight with you.
A battle you with me must wage,
And life for life we must engage.
My glove I here throw on the ground;
To take it up, Sir, you are bound.

My Liege and Lords, before you all
To single Combat I him call.

Don't suffer him to sneak away,
Till you decide who wins the day."

Reynard was in no pleasant mood,
To go and venture life and good.
This Wolf, thought he, is stout and tall,
And I, though nimble, am but small;
But one advantage I have got,
Else all my tricks would go to pot;



He cannot hurt me with his claws,
Of which I lately stripp'd his paws,
And though he may pluck up a heart,
I think he still must feel the smart.
"Growler," said he, "you tell a lie,
And all your charges I deny;
To meet you I am not afraid;
I only for your challenge stay'd.
A pledge I will deposit here
That I to-morrow shall appear."

The King the pledges did receive,
And granting to the Parties leave,
He order'd them both to give bail,
To meet next morning without fail.
For Growler, Gib and Brown the bear
Were sureties, that he should appear,
And Gray the badger, did with Maynard
The monkey's son, give bail for Reynard

Now Mistress Pry to Reynard said:
"My friend, you need not be afraid;
My husband, ere he went to Rome,
Left me his pocket-book at home,
In which a prayer he did write
For those who are about to fight.
An Abbot, who esteem'd him much,
Gave it to him; its pow'r is such,

That any one for whom 'tis read
Ere breakfast, so the Abbot said,
Is sure that nobody can slay,
Or deadly wound him on that day.
This pray'r I'll say for you to-morrow;
Then send away all care and sorrow."

He thank'd her, and she made him shear
From back and belly all his hair;
This done, she carefully rubb'd in
Much grease and oil into his skin.
"Should you, by chance, be sore bestead,
Give these tried counsels heed," she said.
"First you must run against the wind,
And where the thickest dust you find;
He will pursue you; then you must
Endeavour to kick up the dust,
And with your tail his eyes must hit,
And you will blind him soon with it.
Meantime you now should go to sleep,
And we strict watch for you shall keep;
But first of all I will with speed
The holy prayer for you read:
Gaude, Abra Cadabara,
Hocus pocus, Beth Abara.
Now, Reynard, with this pow'rful spell
You are from hurt secur'd full well."



Reynard lay down, and was next day
Wak'd by the Otter and by Gray.
A goose they brought for his repast,
And cheerfully he broke his fast.
This done, all those who did befriend him
Came into the list t' attend him.





Canto III

The Battle

Argument

A bloody battle now ensues ;
The Wolf at first the Fox pursues,
Who teases him with cunning flight,
And almost robs him of his sight.
Stout Growler next, when nearly slain,
Gets th' upper hand of him again.
Reynard at last once more assails him,
And Growler's prowess nought avails him.

When Reynard came along, the King
Could not refrain from simpering.
Reynard, thought he, thou artful Knave,
Who taught thee thus to grease and shave ?
Thou art a cunning rogue indeed ;
I long to see how thou wilt speed.

Reynard now bent to him his knee,
And paid the Queen his courtesies ;
With seeming unconcernèd face,
Before the lists he took his place,

Where Growler and his friends he found.

The trumpets then began to sound,
And next the Wardens did appear,
And call'd the Champions forth to swear.
Growler advanc'd, declar'd on oath
Reynard was sneak and villain both,
A murd'rer and a treach'rous wight,
For which assertion he would fight.

Then Reynard in his turn did swear,
That Growler was a perjurer;
To prove his charge he did defy him,
Because he basely did belie him.

The Wardens then admonish'd both,
To fight with honour and good troth.
This being done, the lists were clear'd,
Where both the Combatants appear'd.

Once more did Pry the Fox remind
Of what she erst to him enjoin'd.

"I know," said he, "you mean it well,
And for your comfort let me tell
That this is not the first adventure,
In which my limbs and neck I venture;
And as to this vile caitiff here,
I am not much of him in fear;
I shall come off with victory
And honour to my family."

The Combatants with equal rage
And fury now began t' engage.

The Wolf, by dint of strength and art,
Attack'd the Fox with leap and start;
But Reynard, being shrewd and light,
Avoided him by cunning flight,
And while he ran he did not fail
To load with dust his rugged tail.
When Growler meant to hold him fast,
He nimbly veer'd about at last,
And with his tail the dust and dirt
He full into his face did flirt.
Whilst Growler rubb'd his eyes with pain,
Reynard his flirts renew'd again,
Till Growler was quite spent at last,
And by the throat he held him fast.
"Sir Wolf," he said, "if heretofore
Poor lambs and kids you oft have tore,
It is high time now to repent,
Before your last breath you have spent,
And with contrition to behave,
If you would wish your soul to save."

In this provoking style he spoke,
Striving his enemy to choke;
But Growler was for him too strong,
And broke loose from his hold ere long;
Though ere he got out of his jaws,
Reynard gall'd him with teeth and claws;
One of his eyes was almost out,
And streams of blood ran down his snout.



As soon as he his blood did view,
At Reynard in a rage he flew ;
He got him under, and his paw
He seiz'd, and held it in his jaw.
" You caitiff, your last hour is come,"
Said he, " and you'll meet with your doom.
It shall not avail you now, to shear,
To flirt, kick up a dust and smear.
I'll make you pay for all your lies,
And for the damage of my eyes."

Now Reynard was in great distress ;
He thought t' himself : If I confess,
I am a dead man ; and if not,
Death ne'ertheless will be my Lot.
But howsoever this may fall,
I have deserv'd it after all.

" Dear Cousin," said he, " be not wroth,
For what hath pass'd, I'm very loth ;
Take for your fine all that I have ;
Nay, send me to the holy grave,
Or if you bid me I will roam
For you to Compostell and Rome ;
I'll take my oath that I'll be true
In all eternity to you ;
Your slave and vassal I will be.
And so shall all my clan with me.
Whatever I may catch of game,
I'll bring to you and to your Dame ;

Of geese and ducks, of fowl and fish,
You'll daily get the nicest dish;
I'll watch for you and for your wife,
That no one shall attempt your life.
I am deem'd shrewd and you are stout;
So we can help each other out;
For with your strength and with my skill,
We must prevail where'er we will.
Besides, we are so near akin,
That hurting me would be great sin.
Nay, if I could have waiv'd this fight,
It would have been my great delight.
But although forc'd against my will,
I in the battle spar'd you still.
You would have been much worse annoy'd,
If all my skill I had employ'd.
Great harm as yet hath not been done;
I hope your eye is not quite gone,
And if I can, I do assure you,
I'll do my very best to cure you.
Nay, if it turns out otherwise,
Some good of it will still arise;
For 'twill be saving pains to you,
To shut *one* window and not *two*.
I offer you another thing:
Here, in the presence of the King,
My wife and both my sons shall pay
Obeisance to you, and shall pray,

That for their sake you would forgive
Their Sire, and suffer him to live.
I'm ready also to declare,
That basely I the truth did spare;
That I belied and cheated you,
Though nothing bad of you I knew.
I do not know what greater offer
I to the King himself could proffer.
My life is in your hands, 'tis true,
But pray, what good will 't do to you
To kill me? You'd have cause to fear
All my relations, far and near.
You are too prudent and too wise,
And know too well yourself t' advise,
While you can gain for better ends,
A set of true and constant friends.
To me 'tis much the same, God wot,
If you will kill me now or not."

"Don't take me, Sir, for such a goose,"
Quoth Growler, "as to let you loose.
If you could give a World of gold,
I would not now let go my hold.
Too oft you've broke your oath before,
And I shall trust your words no more.
I should not get from you a straw
If I was to release your paw.
As to your friends, I do not care;
Let them offend me, if they dare.



Look out, pray, for some other fool,
You thief, to make of him your tool.
You say you spar'd me? 'Tis a lie.
Have you not robb'd me of an eye?
And did you leave me but to fetch
Your breath, a moment's time, you wretch?
No 'twere the greatest blame for me
To grant you life and liberty;
For more than once you to my wife
And me have forfeited your life."

Whilst Growler kept hold of the paw,
Sly Reynard with his other claw
Seiz'd him in such a tender part,
That it made Growler howl with smart,
And forc'd him soon to ope his jaw,
And to let go th' imprison'd paw.
Reynard now tugg'd and pull'd and tore,
And made the Wolf spit blood and gore;
He brought him senseless to the ground,
And dragg'd him through the lists around.

When this his wife and friends perceiv'd,
They were much terrified and griev'd;
They pray'd the King to use his right,
And to suspend the bloody fight.

The King took their request to heart,
And bade the Champions straight to part,
To whom the Leopard and the Ounce,
As Wardens, did his will announce.



“Reynard,” they said, “the King has sent
To let you know ’tis his intent
To put an end to all your strife.
He bids you to spare Growler’s life;
For ’twould be pity after all,
If either of you both should fall.
Meantime all who are present say,
That you at last have won the day.”

“I’m glad you tell me this; I thank ye
And will obey the King,” quoth Rankey.
“To win the day was all I wanted.
I only beg, that leave be granted
To all my friends here to declare
What they may think about th’ affair.”

They all call’d out with one accord:
“We wish that you obey our Lord.”
And straight about him they did crowd,
And came to wish him joy aloud.
E’en those who lately did complain
Strove most his favour now to gain,
And brought their wives and daughters in,
To claim the honour of his Kin.
*While fortune smiles, the World is kind,
And friends and flatterers we find;
But soon as wealth and pow’r decay,
Both friends and flatt’ers skulk away.*
So Reynard’s friends, when he had won
The day, their fairest face put on;



With fifes and drums they made a levy,
And call'd upon him to be merry.
"In troth you fought it well," they said;
"At first we rather were afraid,
You would be worsted; but with glee
We saw you gain the victory,
And we admir'd your skill and wit."

"It was indeed a lucky hit,"
Said he. The Wardens of the Ring
Came to present him to the King.
"Reynard," quoth Noble, "We must say
That in the end you won the day.
You stand acquitted of the Charge,
And from all fines We you discharge;
The rest we shall consult about,
As soon as Growler can go out;
Meantime it ought to satisfy ye,
That We adjourn it *sine die*."

"My Liege," quoth Reynard, "I abide
By what You graciously decide.
I've been accus'd by many here,
With whom I ne'er did interfere;
But they would call out: 'Crucify!'
As soon as Growler rais'd a cry.
They knew he held a better place,
Than I of late in your good Grace;
No one durst venture to control him,
But all were eager to cajole him,



And therefore, whether right or wrong,
They with the current went along.
They those hungry dogs resembled,
Who at a kitchen-door assembled
In hopes of meeting with a treat.
A Cur had stole a joint of meat,
And though the scullion with a pail
Of boiling lees bedew'd his tail,
He did not lose hold of his prey,
Which in his mouth he brought away.
When this his comrades saw, they all
With one accord began to call:
'What joint this Cur hath got, pray look!
He must have made friends with the Cook.'

'Yes,' said the Cur, 'fine friends indeed!
You talk so while you see the meat;
But if you look at me behind,
May be you soon will change your mind.'

They look'd, and when they saw how bald
His back and tail were with the scald,
Away they hurried every one,
And left the scalded Cur alone.

Just so at last the Greedy speed;
They don't want friends whilst they succeed,
For every one looks for a share
Or pittance of the dainty
fare,



While those who dare t' oppose their wishes,
Get nothing of the loaves and fishes ;
But to the tail they never look,
Till they are scalded by the Cook ;
For seldom they maintain their place,
But are turn'd out with great disgrace.
This, Sir, shall never be *my* case ;
I'll strive to merit your good Grace,
And use my wit for noble ends,
To gain applause from foes and friends.”
“ No more of this,” the King replied ;
“ I'm with your promise satisfied,
And therefore I again restore
A Baron's rights t' you as before ;
But while with pow'r We you invest,
Take care to use it for the best.
If you are wise in your deport,
You will be useful to the Court ;
For with the keenness of your wit
The nicest points you know to hit.
I will hear no complaints of you,
As long as you are good and true ;
You shall be Chancellor of State,
And shall preside at each debate ;
And all our Subjects shall abide
By what you order and decide.”

Thus Reynard first became so great
In Court and City, Church and State,
That whatsoe'er he doth, in spite
Of rhyme or reason, must be right.

Meantime poor wounded Growler lay
Stretch'd on the ground in great dismay.
His Wife and Children, Gib and Brown,
Came forth in dumps, and much cast down,
And on a barrow strew'd with hay,
They gently carried him away.
The Surgeons came, his wounds to see,
Of which they counted twenty-three,
Which having dress'd, they rubb'd a dose
Of powder'd herbs into his nose.
This done, they did assure his Wife,
There was no danger for his life.
He tried to take a little rest,
But was with grief too much oppress'd;
For Reynard had so sorely gall'd him,
That pain and anguish quite appall'd him.

Reynard now went and begg'd the King
To grant him leave for travelling,
His Wife and Children to relieve,
Who for his absence much would grieve.
King Noble granted his request,
And only bid him do his best



Soon to return to Court again.
He promis'd it, and with a train
Of friends and clients he set out,
And proudly wagg'd his tail about.

Full many there are now-a-days,
Who get preferr'd by Reynard's ways.
Red beards they do not always show;
But that they're deep ones all Men know.
He now return'd to Malpertouse,
Where we shall leave him with his Spouse,
Relating to her what had pass'd:
How he had beat the Wolf at last,
And had regain'd the King's good grace,
Who rais'd him to the highest place.

Here ends the Fable. Our intent
Was to amuse you, while we meant
To show, what th' adage says of old:
That *Wit is better far than Gold.*

Ye End



